

Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara

by GBJackson

Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Adventure, Drama

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2013-09-19 06:52:06

Updated: 2014-10-11 06:16:16

Packaged: 2016-04-26 16:07:00

Rating: T

Chapters: 22

Words: 48,893

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Jarin, his FiancÃ© Tarina and the people of berk have enjoyed a season of peace and growth following Stoick the Vast's escape from the clutches of Gelbrun the Mad, Chief of Nartara. But as is always the case, seasons change.

1. Chapter 1 - Seasons Change

I neither own nor claim any rights to How To Train Your Dragon

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara **Chapter One â€œSeasons Change**

"He watched me draw a picture of him in the sand. I didn't hear him approach. Just the noises he was making when he reached my side. Then he did something I never would have expected. He tore a limb off a tree and began drawing a picture of his own. It began with a large irregular shape that encompassed me and my drawing. Then he stopped, glanced at me, and then tapped the end of the limb on the ground, as if to mark a spot. Then he began to draw several irregular shapes inside the big one. He was so focused on it that he nearly knocked my head off with the leafy end of the limb, Finally he tossed the limb aside and sat there watching me..."

"I stood up and began to walk towards the outside of the shape, and stepped on one of the lines he drew. His growl made me stop and lift my foot. The growl turned to almost a contented purr. Did he really react to me stepping on what he drew? I had to test it. I put my foot down on the line again, and again he growled. Deciding to have a little fun, I stepped on the line again, and this time he not only growled, but crouched down as if getting ready to pounce. Clearly he was not as amused as I was.

_"If I was going to get out of his drawing, I needed to do it without stepping on a line. So I began taking steps into the smaller

irregular shapes, turning, sidestepping, back-stepping, almost like a dance. Finally I reached the edge and found myself in the space occupied by the spot where he tapped the ground with the stick. And I realized I was now standing right in front of him, with my back to him._

He looked down at me, waiting to see what I would do next. His eyes shone with a burning intelligence and curiosity. I tried once again to reach out and touch him. And again he bared his teeth at me and growled. But this time he did not retreat. In that moment, I realized what his drawing was about. He WANTED me to get close to him, but he was controlling the terms of the meeting. How intelligent was he? I considered the shapes he drew. The way they were laid out, based on natural movement without decision as to which space I wouldn't step in, my steps would lead me right to the shape with the dot in it. He planned it.

I still wanted to touch him. Maybe he would let me. if I let him be in control. I took a deep breath, closed my eyes and faced away from him. I held my hand out, open in a non-threatening way, palm towards him. This was dangerous. If he really meant to harm me, I was completely open to attack.

He made his move. I felt his nose against my palm. He was nuzzling me, much like a dog would. I was thrilled. Relief and joy washed over me, and I looked at him... His eyes were closed. When he opened them he saw I was looking at him and snorted. No teeth bared this time. But he quickly turned aside and dashed away. Clearly, that was as far as things would go, and I had no mind to press the matter. It was getting late, I was hungry, and I needed to get back.

It was a breakthrough... It was amazing. What, I wondered, would the days ahead lead to. Would he really trust me? Could I really trust him? How many pages of the Book of Dragons would I be able to fill about the Night Fury from just what I could observe? An intriguing thought then came to mind. The other entries in the Book of Dragons focused on how Dragons killed. How they could BE killed. How to fight them. Did anyone ever bother to learn how they lived and behaved when nobody was swinging a sword or axe at them? Sure they were deadly dangerous. But then so were we. At the time, I had no idea that such thoughts would lead to what I can only call a golden age for Berk. Where Dragon and Viking regard each other with mutual respect, and even adoration.

Tarina marked the page in the book she was reading, A History of Dragon Training, Volume One, by Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III, First Rider of Berk. She smiled with fondness thinking back to the moment she experienced the Dragon Bond with Shadowhorn, her fiancÃ©'s Monstrous Nightmare. It was a wonderful experience: joy and belonging wrapped up in one powerful emotional surge that started in the heart and spread to the extremities, resulting in momentary weakness in the knees. She had known no other feeling like it, so far.

She would be married soon, and her husband-to-be, Jarin, truly made her feel like a woman should: Safe, Secure, Adored and Respected. She had known abuse from her father ever since her mother and little brother were killed during a dragon raid several years back. Abuse and nothing but warnings about how men only wanted one thing from her, and would do everything they could to take it. The warnings were true, sadly. Nartara had deteriorated from a peaceful island paradise

to a place where chaos reigned. The streets were not safe at night, and there were stories spreading all over just before she left of rape and murder even in the more higher-class areas of town. She was glad she had left.

She would not stay gone forever. There was a plan in motion, made easier by her father's insane movement of having taken Stoick the Vast, Chief of Berk, prisoner when he was in Nartara on a diplomatic mission a few months ago. Stoick had agreed on the plan, and preparations were under way. Taking a diplomat hostage when no formal declaration of hostility had been made was in fact a formal declaration of hostility on Nartara's part. One which Berk had the right to act on without restraint. And the plan was to act. A small fleet of ships would land on Nartara supported from the air by the Riders of Berk on their dragons. Stoick would lead the fleet, and his son, Hiccup, would be leading the dragon riders.

The plan involved one other element, which she had yet to tell her fiancÃ©. But that was about to change. There would be no secrets from him. Truth be told, she would have shared it with him before now, but he was so protective of her that she knew that he would try to talk her out of it, she wouldn't budge, and then they would go without speaking to each other, and she did not want that. At that moment, there was a knock at the door. She stood up from her reading chair and placed the book on the small table.

She did not have to ask who it was. The Gronckle guarding the house would have alerted her the moment he so much as smelled an unauthorized person approaching. She opened the door, and there was Jarin standing before her. His shoulder-length hair tied back by a leather cord, his horned Viking helmet, a gift that Stoick presented him at Hiccup's request for achieving such great success in training and caring for two Monstrous Nightmares who were both victims of terrible abuse. He wore a gray sash over his traditional Berk-style green and brown attire. A golden dragon wing symbol was embroidered on the sash, making it a formal badge of office as a Rider of Berk. He was now an Intermediate trainer, and she had become a junior trainer. She smiled at him, and traced the edge of the symbol with her finger.

"It suits you so well, Jarin," she said as she leaned in to kiss him on the cheek. "I am so glad that they gave it to you."

Jarin grinned sheepishly. "In all honesty, my love, I still don't feel worthy. But then, I always have been my own worst critic."

"If you say so, chief," she said, returning his grin and watching him roll his eyes. It wasn't long ago that he called everyone else "chief" because of his lowly origins as a farmhand, which put pretty much everyone else above him. She sort of felt like that now, at least here in Berk. In Nartara, it would have been a different story. Regardless of how her father treated her, she was still seen as the daughter of a Chief, and was accorded the respect her station entailed. If she snapped her fingers and told someone to jump, then they had better do it, unless the Chief himself countermanded her command, which he seldom did, because she seldom gave commands that would reach his attention. But here on Berk, she had no authority. She was a guest, until she was married to Jarin.

The marriage traditions troubled her a bit. By Viking law, a marriage

was to be publicly consummated. She was a chief's daughter and the law applied double strong to her. The fact that she no longer saw her father as worthy or mentally fit to be Chief did not matter. Stoick may officiate over the marriage ceremony, but she and Jarin could not be officially married until they publicly consummated the marriage in Nartara.

"I need to tell you something, Jarin," she said, her smile replaced with a serious expression.

"I'm listening," he said.

She took a deep breath and sighed. "You know that a raid is being planned against my home. But what you do not know is one of the major details of that plan."

The silence seemed to drag as she seemed to be looking at something far away. "What detail might that be?" he asked.

"I'm coming with Stoick on his ship. I'll be riding the Toram's dragon. I'm going to challenge my father, Gelbrun the Mad, for his position as leader of my people."

She, Jarin and the people of Berk had enjoyed a season of peace and growth. But as always was the case, seasons change...

* * *

><p>This is Chapter One of my second story concerning Jarin. If you have not already done so, check out my first story, "Jarin and the Riders of Berk."

Please let me know what you think.

2. Chapter 2 - Sowing the Seeds

I neither own nor claim any rights to How To Train Your Dragon

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Two â€" Sowing the Seeds**

Several months had passed since Toram had helped Stoick the Vast escape from Gelbrun's dungeon. Several months since he had experienced the Dragon Bond with the Monstrous Nightmare the Mad Chief had also imprisoned down there and insisted on having tortured daily. It was an amazing feeling, the only thing better he had ever experienced happened on the night of his wedding. He found himself missing the dragon, and wishing that he could see him again.

Gelbrun had come down to the dungeon again, about an hour after Stoick and the dragon had escaped to find Toram laying on the floor moaning up at the ceiling. A charging Monstrous Nightmare could really pack a punch that not even armor could completely protect against. The Mad Chief was furious with him, demanding first how he could let them escape, then acting all concerned about his well-being, then lapsing back into demands that he investigate the escape immediately and bring word of anything unusual. Yep...

Gelbrun's helmet horns were surely not screwed in straight.

It had been a relief that he had been ordered to personally investigate the dungeon. It meant that Gelbrun trusted him, or at least had no reason to doubt his loyalty. His chest was killing him as he looked through the hay on the floor where Stoick was chained. To his credit, the Chief of Berk had thought to take the file with him, and what he had done to the chain looked like a weak link had broken. That would be his report to Gelbrun. That the prisoner had used raw viking strength to stress the chain to the point of breaking, and that the Ripper had not bothered to check to make sure nothing was amiss. With the Ripper clearly ripped apart by the dragon, there was nobody to dispute the statement.

Gelbrun had responded as expected, stomping and fuming about incompetence and ending his tantrum with a chilling statement that the Ripper got what he deserved for HIS incompetence. Then he went soft again, expressing concern over Toram's condition, and telling him to take a couple of days to recuperate, followed by a sarcastic order to get the dent out of his armor so he wouldn't look like a fool.

Several months, and he had made progress in extorting local criminals to getting a feel for the people's thoughts about Gelbrun's leadership and mental faculties. He had already identified several ringleaders in what was an embryonic stage of rebellion against their Chief. A crime punishable by death. Toram's informants assumed that he was working for Gelbrun's best interest and that by informing him of what they had learned, they would earn his mercy and that he would look the other way. Of course he would. For now. The sort of crimes they were committing were also punishable by death, which Gelbrun would quickly call for regardless of his state of mind.

As to the rebels... It was useful information to know who to count on when the hammer would come down. Gelbrun was insane. Nartara was in chaos. A strong leader would need to be instated who would be able to win the people. He really wished that Tarina had not disappeared. Though she was a woman, she was wise and not afraid to do what needed to be done to solve problems. If she were here and on the right side of all of this, he would follow her to the ends of Midgard. But she wasn't here. She had abandoned Nartara. It was only him. He did not want to be Chief. But when push came to shove, he would do what needed to be done whether he wanted to or not.

The time had come to do a little more than just know who to count on. He had to make sure they knew who they could count on. Mainly because when push would come to shove, he did not want to be caught between a mob of rioters and Gelbrun. His informants had identified Tynimon, the baker, as the one most responsible for organizing the resistance, by slipping messages to other members into the cloth wrapping he put around loaves of bread.

This morning, he had followed one of those members to the baker's shop. He waited outside the door and listened to the conversation inside, waiting for the completion of the sale. He walked in and noted with satisfaction how both the baker and his customer stiffened and glanced uneasily at each other. Anyone not knowing what he already knew wouldn't have thought anything of the silent exchange between the two. He smiled at them.

He locked the door before drawing his sword and extending his hand to the _customer_. "I'll take that bread, sir," he said. "_don't_ unwrap it," he added as the _customer_ started to remove the cloth. He took the bundle, and ordered both the baker and the _customer_ to back into the corner and sit down. They complied.

Because he knew what to look for, he easily found the note folded neatly into the wrapping. "So there is to be a meeting at midnight tomorrow at the usual place." he whispered "ah ah ah... Don't get up," he said, raising his sword to point towards the _customer._

The baker and the other man looked at each other once again, sweat appearing on their brows.

"Let me explain what is going to happen here," Toram said, looking back and forth between them. "You will proceed with your meeting at the usual place. I don't want to know where that is. This is not going to be about what I know. It is about what you need to know. If and when you make your move against Gelbrun, I am on your side. He is a fool who has lost his mind and his perspective as a leader. I intend to take his place. And I need the support of the people."

the baker spit. "You're one of his personal guard. If you want to overthrow him, why not just assassinate him and take over?"

"What, and have all the people know that an assassin took control, still feeling the need to live in fear for their lives?" Toram sneered when he said it. "Back before Gelbrun ruled by fear, before he lost his wife and son, Nartara was a wonderful place to live and do business. Now chaos reigns. Chaos cannot be used to put an end to chaos."

The baker pursed his lips, considering Toram's words. "Maybe not. What do you have in mind."

"What I am about to tell you goes no further. If I catch wind of it after this, I WILL expose the lot of you. And anything you say to try to implicate me will only be seen as an attempt to dodge an arrow. Several months ago, Gelbrun held Stoick the Vast, Chief of Berk prisoner." He watched as their eyes widened with shock. There was no formal declaration of hostilities between Nartara and Berk. But taking their chief prisoner would certainly serve as one. "He escaped on the back of the Monstrous Nightmare Gelbrun kept in the dungeon" Their eyes widened even further at that. Everyone knew that Gelbrun liked to torture Monstrous Nightmares because one had supposedly killed his wife and son. It was the fact that the Chief of Berk rode a dragon that made their eyes bulge.

"Yes," he continued. "The people of Berk ride dragons. And from what I've learned, they know how to use them in battle. Gelbrun has stirred up a hornet's nest. Berk will no-doubt retaliate by both sea and air. When they do, the rebellion will use that moment to strike. Gelbrun will not be able to defend against both Berk and a rebellion."

The baker nodded. "What you say makes a great deal of sense. But how do we know that Berk won't attack us as well.?"

"A good question," Toram replied. "The truth is we cannot be certain of that. However, Stoick the Vast has a reputation of being fair and

just. It was not the people of Nartara who threw him in a dungeon. It was Gelbrun who did that. So it stands to reason that there is a very good chance that Berk's rite of vengeance will be directed at Gelbrun himself. And those who stand with him. Either way, Gelbrun's days as chief are numbered, and when he is removed, order will be restored, and I will work to see to it that Nartara is once again a wonderful place to live and do business. Can you gentlemen live with that arrangement?"

The baker and his compatriot looked at each other, then back at Toram. "I can live with it," the Baker answered, followed by the other man's agreement.

"Very well," Toram said, "Conduct your business as you have. Do not mention me in your discussions. I'll do what I can from within to make things as smooth as possible for your efforts. Bolster your numbers but keep everyone on the same page. And when Berk attacks, so do we."

That was all there was to it. Now it was a matter of playing the waiting game. And if it became apparent that Berk had decided not to act on their right to vengeance, the rebellion would go forward anyway. But either way, it would do so according to a solid plan, that if carried out would mean a decisive victory, rather than a protracted struggle resulting in far more collateral damage.

The seeds of rebellion were planted. Patience would be the rain and time would be the sunlight. And soon Gelbrun would reap what he had sown.

* * *

><p>Here is Chapter Two. Hopefully you all will enjoy it. Thank you for reading. Please leave your feedback.

3. Chapter 3 - Dragon Council

I neither own nor claim any rights to How To Train Your Dragon

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Three â€" Dragon Council**

Two-legs were stupid. They were brave, strong, potentially friendly and generous... But they were stupid. This every dragon knew and accepted. It was nothing personal. It was just a fact. Two-legs could not sense truth in each other's minds when they spoke. Toothless had observed several occasions where members of the council lied through their teeth to Stoick about this issue or that. Nothing major or harmful. Just the sort of deception to keep from enduring one of Stoick's long-winded lectures. He could sense that in their minds as well. But the fact that Stoick couldn't see through their falsehoods made him look stupid to Toothless. Not that he would or could say so, but there it was. It was decided that with all this talk of going to raid Nartara, the dragons needed their own council.

While Thornado was on the council, his status of being bonded to Stoick did not matter. Toothless was voted for as its head. But

Thornado brought valuable information to the dragon council. Often times, when Stoick was riding the Thunderdrum, he would talk to him, as a way of getting things off his chest. There was a lot of information in there that the Chief would not so openly share with any other Two-leg. It was a testimony to how much Stoick trusted Thornado. At today's meeting, the Thunderdrum reported details of the battle plan.

"That is consistent with what I have gotten from Hiccup," said Toothless. "It seems that preparations are almost complete. And in spite of their limited mental capacity, they seem to be covering all the bases. I will, of course, be carrying Hiccup into battle, leading the senior riders and their bondsiblings. But we need to be clear on what they have planned for the rest of us."

"I will be carrying Jarin, that goes without saying," Shadowhorn said, looking almost excited. "I look forward to seeing first hand the way the Two-legs of Nartara behave toward us. Whether they are all to be despised, or if there are others like my Two-leg's mate-to-be."

Toothless nodded. "We will all learn that soon enough. Thornado, You know what you and Brokenclaw will be doing?"

"We will be riderless at the onset," Thornado rumbled. "Stoick wants to land on Nartara in the old way, by ship. When the fighting starts, I will carry him. Brokenclaw is being brought along to carry Tarina after Nameless is reunited with his Two-leg."

"Do not call me 'Nameless,' noisemaker." said the Monstrous Nightmare who carried Stoick away from Nartara. "My Two-leg did not have time to give me a name after the bond. When we are reunited, I am sure that will change. If he is even alive. I hope he is." he said it with such affection that the other dragons shook their head.

"Until then," replied Thornado, "You're Nameless..."

"Enough!" growled Toothless. "There are more important matters to discuss. The two of you will be the only ones of us who will start out with no rider. You must look for any signs of anything unexpected that may threaten us as we approach. That insane Two-leg leading the enemy has had months to prepare for an attack from the air. There is no telling what sort of devices his twisted mind may have come up with. Granted, he may not have come up with anything, but you two need to be wary none-the-less."

"I don't like it that so many dragons are being left out of this fight," said Brokenclaw. "There are enough of us and those who ride us to wipe the enemy off the face of Midgard."

"That may be true," replied Toothless. "But Hiccup wants to keep the bulk of his riders and our brothers and sisters here, in case the Berserkers or Outcasts decide they want to take advantage of Stoick and Hiccup being away. What good would it be for the raid to be successful, only for everyone to come back and find their homes overrun. As stupid as Two-legs can be in some things, they are smart enough to realize potential dangers. Let us all hope that this island remains safe while we are away."

The conversation continued for a while, mainly focusing on the typical tactics their riders perform and how they can best cooperate for greatest effect. After Toothless called an end to the meeting, Nameless approached Shadowhorn.

"So, brother," he said. "If you meet Gelbrun, will you eat him like I ate his Ripper?"

Shadowhorn narrowed his eyes. "Had you asked me that question while I was recovering from my injuries, I might have said 'yes.' But now, in as much as I still feel rage towards the despised ones, I find that the feeling of pity is stronger."

Nameless nodded. "well, it was the Ripper who hurt me most. All Gelbrun did was scream curses at me for the death of his mate and hatchling. As if I had anything to do with it."

"You didn't, but I did," said Brokenclaw who had wandered over to listen to their exchange.

"WHAT!?" exclaimed both Nameless and Shadowhorn at the same time.

"I've felt enough recently from the two of you and Jarin's mate-to-be to understand who this mad chief is. We met before. He thinks I killed his mate and hatchling. They were already dead when I found them floating in the water. During one of the raids to Nartata that the Red Death sent us on, a band of renegade Two-legs decided to make use of the confusion and attacked the town. They killed Gelbrun's family and had tossed them into the water. The dragon raid was winding down, and I thought to pull the bodies ashore. I was saying a prayer to the Creator-of-All for their souls when Gelbrun came along. All he would have seen was me standing over the broken bodies of his family. What else could he conclude other than I had killed them?"

"That is horrible," Nameless said. "So Gelbrun is in a rage-that-will-not-end because he thinks one of our kind killed his family, and so he has been content to capture and torture our kind for years because of it?"

Shadowhorn sighed. "So it would seem."

"You are right to pity him, brother," Nameless said after a moment. "He's let his rage consume his mind. Now it seems to be all he has. His misery should end."

* * *

><p>I know this was a short one, but I wanted to examine what the Dragons might be doing and thinking when they aren't carrying humans around. It stands to reason that they would be expressing their thoughts about the upcoming raid. I also wanted to give some insight into why Gelbrun is how he is. He's got his own take on what he saw, which will come out in a future chapter. I think next chapter will be Hiccup and Astrid. Either that or Jarin. Maybe all three... Thanks for reading. Please review and share what you think.

****Be blessed... ****

4. Chapter 4 - How To Rename Your Dragon

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter 4 -
How to Rename your Dragon**

Jarin had expressed all sorts of concern about Tarina going on the coming raid against Nartara. But he knew her well enough that she would not budge. Besides, the battle plan had been approved, and her part in it was one of the key points Stoick liked. He had to admit that if things went well, there would be a certain amount of poetic justice involved.

He didn't have to like it, though. And he didn't.

Today, things were going to be a interesting. Before the Nartara issue reared its ugly head, Hiccup had commissioned him for a special assignment that he was to undertake as soon as Shadowhorn recovered enough that he would not need constant supervision. After Stoick returned from Nartara, and this season of peace and growth began, he was able to follow through. Today he would present to Hiccup the list of new dragon species names. Finally, at least as far as the citizens of Berk were concerned, having benefitted for some time from dragons living along side them, the names of several species of Dragon would sound less fearful.

He entered the office at the Dragon Training Academy and sat down on the couch against the wall and waited for Hiccup to finish up with Ruffnut and Tuffnut who were each seated in one of the chairs facing Hiccup's desk.

"I don't care what she said, Tuff," Hiccup was saying. "You and your sister are senior trainers. How you behave is a reflection on this Academy. This Academy is a reflection on me. and my Dad has made it clear that I am a reflection on him. The latest skirmish between the two of you went from one side of the town to the other. The fact that Barf and Belch followed the two of you, stomping and smashing whatever was in his path CAUSED it to have a pretty big impact on this Academy. Only I am not taking responsibility this time. The two of you are. I want the two of you to assess the damage your dragon caused and work together to make sure that what can be fixed IS fixed and what has to be replaced IS replaced. Do I make myself clear?"

Ruffnut made as if to open her mouth to protest, but Tuffnut shot her a warning glance and she held shrugged. "Yes _sir,_" she said, voice dripping with sarcasm. "Perfectly clear," was Tuffnut's response.

Jarin couldn't help but smile. Hiccup's stint as acting chief of Berk while Stoick was away gave him a lot of confidence. And he had not lost it after his father had returned. He didn't throw his weight around unnecessarily the way some people in power did. He made careful decisions and acted on them without fear. And Jarin had to

admit that the debacle that had happened earlier that day with Ruff and Tuff knocking each other silly from one end of town to the other and their Zippleback's heads fighting each other in similar fashion was bad enough to warrant Hiccup putting his prosthetic foot down hard with the twins. Chief Stoick needed to see that Hiccup was handling the situation and that the grievances were being addressed. Now when Stoick would call Hiccup to the carpet on the issue, he can honestly tell his father that the situation is being dealt with. Stoick would see decisiveness. That is, of course, if the twins could keep their fists out of each other's faces and do the task they were given with civility.

As the twins made their way towards the office door, they both glanced at Jarin with displeased expressions. He had to admit that had someone overheard him being dressed down, he would be a little embarrassed and would probably stare daggers at them himself. He wondered why Hiccup hadn't hung the meeting in progress sign up on the door and locked it to keep the discussion private. He also wondered if he was the only one who noticed that the sign only got put on the door when Hiccup and Astrid had their heads together. He also wondered if it was more along the lines of them having their lips locked together. None of my business, really, was his inward response to such wonderings.

"Jarin," Hiccup said, motioning for the older Viking to approach. "Good to see you. I assume this is about the list of dragon species names?"

"You got it, chief." Came Jarin's enthusiastic reply, holding out a folded piece of paper

Hiccup raised an eyebrow at Jarin's use of the word "chief", but then shook his head. He accepted the paper, unfolded it, and began to read:

"Deadly Nadder - Spinetailed Nadder

"Monstrous Nightmare - Majestic Flamescale

"Night Fury: Get Down - Night Fury," he chuckled at that one.

"Hideous Zippleback - Two-headed Zippleback

"Gronckle - Unchanged

"Thunderdrum - Unchanged

"Terrible Terror - Dogdragon?" he asked, looking up at Jarin.

Jarin nodded. "It only makes sense. Once you befriend one, it follows you around like a puppy, and just as hyper. Just as loyal, too."

Hiccup nodded as well. It did makes sense. And Dogdragons were far more common in the region than actual dogs. He had only seen a few dogs in his life, on other islands he had visited. Dogdragons were pretty much good for nothing else than loyal pets. Though Fishlegs had some ideas for ways they could be trained as service creatures. The new species name would fit even better. "These are good. And like we agreed, there's nothing threatening about the names. And the fact that most of them keep essentially the same name, with just a change

in the asjective, we shouldn't find it too hard to transition. I approve of them, and as soon as this mess with Nartara is cleared up, I'll amend the Book of Dragons to reflect these changes."

* * *

><p>Another short one, I know. I wanted to tie up one of the loose ends from my Jarin and the Riders of Berk story as well as work the twins in. I need to give Hiccup and Astrid a scene before too long. I may do that next. The new dragon species names are reflective of the most common species in the region and residing on Berk that humans have tamed and established a bond with. Things like whispering deaths and changewings are not native and therefore were not included.

Please review and let me know what you think.

God bless...

5. Chapter 5 - Chaotic Order

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Five
- Chaotic Order**

Gelbrun was angry. He could not remember the last time he was not angry, but that was beside the point. His daughter had abandoned him. Stoick of Berk had escaped from him. His dragon was stolen from him. He found himself wondering where exactly it was that he had lost control.

Berk was going to attack. Stoick was a Viking, regardless of the fact that he was also a dragonlover. He would not allow his imprisonment and the deception which led to it go unchallenged. To do so would be a dishonor. It wouldn't be so bad under normal circumstances. But Berk possessed dragon power, and Nartata didn't. That left Gelbrun out of his element. For the first time as a chief, he felt fear.

He pounded his fist on the wooden arm of his chair so hard that it had started to splinter, the rough wood cutting his flesh. He didn't notice the blood though. He was too busy listening for the voices to tell him what to do. They had started whispering to him the night he found his beloved Andrina and his little Gelb dead on the beach. They whispered to him what he already knew, that that Monstrous Nightmare standing over them had done it. They whispered that every dragon must die, but a Nightmare must always be kept captive and made to pay for the crime of one of its own. It must feel pain like he, Gelbrun, felt it. Day after day without rest until death would come.

He was a Viking! Odin would be behind him! Thor would strengthen him! And in spite of dragon power, Berk would be defeated, and he would make sure that a new monstrous nightmare would become a new trophy of pain and suffering, decorating his dungeon for years to come. He would see it so!

His fear eased off a bit, his old confidence returning. He finally noticed the blood on his hand. He stared at it for a few moments as if he had discovered something incredible, and then he started to cackle.

O O O

Astrid flew lead in a v-shaped formation of nadders, guiding a team advanced riders through sharp turns and dives, multi-directional splits and precision reformations. A few months ago, this was part of what was going to be a dragon dance, and now it was being modified with combat in mind. In less than a week, the senior riders would be leaving for the raid on Nartara, and she was determined that her team of Nadder-riders would have every possible maneuver down to reflex. If the Outcasts or Berserkers were to take advantage of Stoick and his raiders' absence, they would meet massive resistance from the sky.

Spitelout was being left in charge of the ground defenses. His warriors were strong and disciplined and were ready to repel anyone that might get past the aerial defenses. Astrid had to smile at the hand fate had dealt her. Were it not for the events leading to peaceful co-existence with the dragons, she would have likely been one of those warriors. Now, for all intents and purposes, she was as much a general as he was.

She gave a hand-signal and her team eased into a single-file formation behind her and she led them down towards the academy gate. They glided gracefully in and touched down softly.

Snotlout was leaning against his Monstrous Nightmare... No... Majestic Flamescale (Astrid was still getting used to the new species names given to some of the dragons Jarin had chosen). He had his arms crossed and he was looking her up and down. She waited for it.

"That was some beautiful flying, Astrid," he said.

Here it comes, she thought to herself.

"Just as beautiful as you, babe." Snotlout grinned at her.

"Thank you, Snotlout," she said, walking right past him, leaving him standing with his mouth hanging open. Hiccup was right. Snotlout had become so used to her aggressive responses to his advances that a simple non-committal acceptance of his compliments left him speechless. Once again, Hiccup had proven that not all her problems need be solved with physical violence. Not that she would ever admit that to him, of course.

"FORM UP!" she hears Snoutlout yell. It was his turn to take to the sky with is team. She turned to watch Jarin and the others mount their Flamescales and move into a half-moon position, facing Snotlout. Jarin's Flamescale, Shadowhorn, had fully recovered from the horrible abuse he had suffered at the hands of Gelbrun the Mad. Hiccup's ingeniously designed body wrap of leather and scales meshed almost seamlessly with the dragon's natural scales. A casual observer would never know that underneath, there was nothing but scarred hide, where his scales had been ripped out, leaving him vulnerable to his own fire.

Soon, Gelbrun the Mad would pay for crimes against both man and dragon. And the irony of it would be that one of the very objects of the Nartatan Chief's cruelty would be among the weapons that would be brought to bear against him.

"You really shouldn't stare at him. He's engaged,"

Astrid turned to see Hiccup standing next to her. She had been so lost in her musings that she hadn't noticed him approach. And he was wearing that gap-toothed grin that let her know he was just teasing. Still, her usual response was justified: She punched him in the arm.

"Ow!"

"That's for being ridiculous," she said. She shoved his face aside when he puckered his lips in anticipation of the usual follow-up. "What you get for everything else will have to wait for later." She grinned as his shoulders slumped in obvious disappointment.

"Are you up for a picnic at our island tonight?" Hiccup looked at her, with hope in his eyes.

She thought about it for a moment. "You know? I could reall use a delicious plate of your fish and vegetables. If you are up to making them, of course."

"I would be happy to," he said.

O O O

Hiccup finished preparing the vegetables cooked with fish and scooped half of the meal onto Astrid's plate and the rest on his. The campfire was warm and relaxing. They ate in silence.

"I'm glad we did this tonight," Astrid said. "With what is about to happen, it's very possible we may never get the chance again."

Hiccup frowned. "We can't be thinking like that, Astrid. We're going to go to Nartara, find Gelbrun, and put him in his place. Tarina will assume control over there, and then we'll come home and get back to business as usual. We'll be fine."

Astrid nodded her head. "You're probably right. Probably. Anyway, whatever happens, we have a few days. It would be nice to just enjoy them together, just in case."

Hiccup leaned in and brushed her lips with a gentle kiss. She shoved him back, moved to sit in his lap and in turn leaned forward and kissed him passionately. "Thats for everything else from earlier today," she said when they both caught their breath.

Hiccup laughed.

Astrid looked at him, her head tilted slightly to the side. She reached up behin her head and loosened the cord holding her hair in its usual braid and let it fall freely about her shoulders. "You're the only man I can really let my hair down with," she said with a twinkle in her blue eyes.

Hiccup laughed again, and she joined in. It was a bad pun, but the stress both of them had been under with all the extra training and preparation for the raid made even bad puns into wonderful relief. They wrapped themselves in each other's arms, and held each other close. The fire began to die, but they didn't care. They kept themselves warm. Here on this little island, they could leave all pretenses aside and just love each other. Astrid was right. There was no guarantee that they would survive the raid. Moments like this, where all that mattered was being strength and comfort for the girl he loved and receiving the same from her, were a blessing.

Of course, it had to come to an end. They needed to get back to berk and get some sleep. Yet another day filled with chaotic order lay ahead.

* * *

><p>Okay... not too much to this one, I know. I needed to get some Hiccup-Astrid interaction in and I felt that Gelbrun needed a scene right about now. Anyone have any opinions on how I am handling his character? I think I'll do a StoickGobber scene next. I want to try to use everyone at least once in this story. Please review. Thanks**

Be blessed

6. Chapter 6 - Wonders of Flight

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Six - Wonders of Flight**

Jarín found himself hard pressed to keep up with the maneuvers Snotlout was leading him and the rest of the team of Majestic Flamescale riders on. Just a month ago, Shadowhorn would not have been able to handle it, but today his dragon was full of energy and life, and seemed totally thrilled with the exercise. It was hard to believe that when he had first encountered Shadowhorn, the dragon was on the brink of death. And it was amazing to know that he had a direct hand in his recovery and rehabilitation. The two were now nearly as inseparable as he and Tarina had become.

Tarina...

Just thinking about her and the danger she was about to be putting herself in in the coming raid on her home island of Nartara made him uneasy. He hated the thought of her going into battle. However, he could not really see any other option for her. Her father was a madman and was allowing her homeland to fall apart for the sake of his personal vendetta against dragons that no longer attacked. He killed people he merely suspected as having an opposing viewpoint, and when he managed to capture a Majestic Flamescale like Shadowhorn, he took delight in having it tortured as he sat and watched. He was not fit for leadership.

Tarina was blood-bound to Gelbrun the mad, as his daughter. She could declare him unworthy of lead and could invoke a right of a Blood-bound to take control. One of two things would happen. Either her father would challenge the rite and participate in a fight to the death, or he would acknowledge it and step down and be allowed to peacefully retire. The former was the more likely occurrence. That also brought some interesting possibilities. If the people supported Tarina's claim, and her father challenged, they could stand behind her with a result being that if she were to be killed, they would overthrow him anyway.

Tarina had explained it to him. This had been the way Nartara's succession laws had evolved over time. There was small chance of the people backing Tarina. She feared that because she left, they would see her as an outcast and let her die at her own father's hand. The truth of the matter was that she had abandoned her people in a selfish desire to escape from the hell she had been living.

Snotlout banked sharply to the right and Jarin followed suit reflexively. Then he went back to contemplating the situation. Tarina had opened up completely to him. Her father had abused her every day of her life since her mother and brother had died. It wasn't physical abuse most of the time. He had looked at her like she was worthless. He would not speak to her about anything that had anything to do with life as it was when his family was all alive. Except for the one time when he had told her that she was nothing but a waste of flesh and blood, and that there was nothing left of the family but him. He had looked her in the eyes, and she into his. His eyes were clear and focused when he said it. He was lucid, and had meant what he had said.

She had no real power as far as Gelbrun was concerned. The people, on the other hand, had no clue of what their chief thought of her. They saw the chief's daughter and followed her commands. She was careful not to abuse that arrangement. So she kept her commanding to a logical minimum. So her father had no reason to override her.

She had to return to Nartara with Stoick. Her father's maniacal imprisonment of Stoick opened up another loophole. Not only Stoick have a right to a vengeance raid, but it gave her an opportunity to claim that she had sought out strong allies to do the right thing for her people. Stoick wasn't thrilled with that particular angle, but even he couldn't deny that if he went along with it, it would present so many solutions to so many problems. If Tarina's claim was valid in the eyes of the people, and she had the strength to back up the challenge she would be making, then it may indeed force Gelbrun to step aside. Berk would be there with both ground and air power. She would be there with strength of will, and the people would be there with a choice. It was a lot to gamble on, but with things as messy as they would likely be, this seemed to be the best way to go. Jarin could not deny that.

Snotlout guided the team back to the Academy. Once everyone had landed, he gathered them around. "Alright people. Any day now, Jarin and I will get the call to fly for Nartara to participate in the raid. We cannot be sure what sort of resistance we will face. The Nartarans fought dragons as long as we did, so they won't be easy marks. But we will have the advantage of being dragon riders. We won't just be swooping in to grab food. We can trick them and do all sorts of things that wouldn't have occurred to a dragon on its own.

That's why I can say with confidence that I... And Jarin, I guess... will be coming back. When I get back, I had better not find the rest of you louts just lounging around sipping mead. You are charged with the defense of Berk in our absence. If you fail in that duty, I will personally make your life miserable, assuming you aren't dead."

The Flamescale riders glanced at each other, clearly wondering if they should take this latest speech from Snotlout seriously. Jarin noticed Snotlout frown. They did NOT need to endure one of his "I'm the boss and you will pay attention" tirades, so Jarin pumped his fist in the air and shouted, "You got it, Chief!" The others pumped their fists in the air and chanted "Snotlout! Snotlout! Oi oi oi!", which brought a grin to Snotlout's face.

"Alright, people!" Snotlout said. "Dismissed!"

Yep... Jarin understood how to keep Snotlout's ego boosted enough that he wouldn't go off on some wild tangent. Technically, they were both now Senior Riders, but Snotlout was the recognized leader of the Flamescale riding team. And Jarin was content to be second in command. He was not after power. Just purpose.

Now that he and the others were dismissed, he mounted Shadowhorn again. "What do you say, friend? Shall we fly?"

The Flamescale growl-purred in a way that clearly meant he agreed. So they took to the air, circled Berk and then Jarin nudged the dragon by the horns slightly and they began to descend.

O O O

Tarina was sitting in her reading chair with a book on the mating habits of dragons in her lap, as written by Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III. It was a collection of observations made on the dragon's nesting island during the hatching season. She was fascinated to learn that it takes exactly one year for a dragon egg to gestate, with the last few days being after they were laid. The male and female dragons mate during the brief window of opportunity between the laying and the hatching. She hoped that she would one day get to visit the island to observe this behavior herself.

She turned the page and was disturbed by the growls being made by the Gronckle guarding her house. She no longer felt uncomfortable in Berk, but she had grown used to having the dragon around, and it seemed to enjoy sleeping on her porch. And snacking on the rocks she always tossed to it. It wasn't angry. It was just alerting her that someone was coming. She opened the door and looked down the road. Nobody was on it. Then she realized that the Gronckle was looking up, so she did too...

It was Jarin on Shadowhorn. They were descending towards her, and a moment later had touched down smoothly.

"Jarin!" she exclaimed, running to him and throwing herself into his arms.

He embraced her and kissed her on the lips, and they rested their foreheads against each other for a moment.

"I wasn't expecting you." she said. "Look how I'm dressed!"

Jarin waved off her comment with a grin. "You're dressed just fine for what I am here for. I wanted to know if you would like to come riding with me."

"On Shadowhorn?" she asked, and he nodded. "I would love to."

She climbed up behind Jarin and held onto him. A moment later they were airborne and soaring high above Berk. "I figured that it would be good to just go riding together." he called over his shoulder. "It's all been business lately, and we need a break."

"I'm all for that," she replied.

They didn't talk much beyond that, They just flew together and took in the sights of Berk in the evening.

"Jarin, look!" she called, shifting her hold on him so she could point. "It's Hiccup and Astrid on their dragons."

Jarin nodded. "I guess they thought to have a romantic moment, too."

"How is it romantic?" she asked. "They are on separate dragons."

Jarin laughed. "That's for the benefit of the village. They are together, Tarina. I mean seriously. I've noticed how they act around each other. And that sign on the door to the Academy office about a meeting in progress always seems to go up whenever they have their heads together in there. He was dressing down Ruff and Tuff the other day about some altercation they caused because their Zippleback stomped on stuff while its heads were attacking each other the way the twins were. The door was not locked and the sign wasn't there."

Tarina thought about this for a moment. "You think they are dishonoring tradition?"

Jarin shook his head. "No... I just think they are trying to avoid drawing attention to their relationship. He's the Chief's son, and the hero who ended the Dragon War. She's one of the best young warriors Berk has seen in a long time. Also a hero for the same reasons. If it became public that they are together, then there would be likely no privacy for either of them, and probably plenty of pressure to marry. And I think that it's more about enjoying each other's company for the time being. I just get that feeling."

"You don't think that Hiccup and Astrid are..."

Jarin felt his mouth turn down automatically. "You know? Maybe it would be best if we just focus on us. What those two do or do not do is not our business. I've never met a more honorable man than Hiccup, nor a more virtuous woman than Astrid, present company excepted, of course."

Tarina dug her fingers into Jarin's side, painfully, and he grunted. "Present company had better be excepted. I assure you my virtue has never been compromised. But okay. Enough about them. Where are we

going?"

Jarin shrugged. "I was planning to take us to the out-island where Shadowhorn washed up. I cannot imagine a more potentially peaceful or secluded spot that isn't too far from Berk. But based on the direction they are headed, I think they have the same idea. I do not want to have to explain why we are following them. Hiccup would probably shrug it off, but Astrid?" He shuddered.

Tarina laughed. Even though she had only lived among the people of Berk for a few months, it had not taken her long to learn that it wasn't wise to cross Astrid Hofferson. And it didn't take much to qualify as crossing her. "How about a little poetic justice?" she asked.

Jarin's brow furrowed. "What do you mean?"

Tarina smiled. "Let's go to the clearing above the cove. Hiccup and Astrid are going to the place where you first saw Shadowhorn. It's only fair if we go to the place where he first saw Toothless. We'll build a fire and just relax for a while."

Jarin smiled. "My dear Tarina, that is an excellent idea."

Tarina leaned her chin on his shoulder, and as he banked Shadowhorn around, she relaxed and just decided to enjoy the wonders of flight...

* * *

><p>Okay, guys... Things are getting ready to heat up. I think I've touched on every one of the key characters and covered the calm before the storm elements. The storm IS brewing and lightning WILL strike. I promise you. Please take a moment to review. Thanks.

7. Chapter 7 - Calm Before the Storm

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Seven â€" Calm Before the Storm**

Stoick the Vast sat in his living room chair before the fire pit, deep in thought. Tomorrow would be the day he and several warriors would set sail for Nartara in a raiding fleet. The target was not the people of Nartara, nor their goods, but rather their Chief, Gelbrun the Mad. This was to be a vengeance raid as payback for the deception used to lure Stoick to Nartara on false pretenses, and his subsequent imprisonment and torture.

Gelbrun had not commanded that a hand be laid on him. What he considered to be torture was watching the Ripper, Gelbrun's head jailer, beat a Monstrous Nightmare... no... a Majestic Flamescale as the dragon species was now officially called... into unconsciousness almost every day. It was ironic that not long ago, he himself was beating dragons into unconsciousness with his bare hands, but that

was before the truth about the dragon raids was discovered and the great queen dragon had been destroyed. Knowing the peaceful nature of dragons (assuming their trust is earned) and the fact that the Ripper did the beating simply to entertain Gelbrun, who reveled in the creature's pain and suffering, made it painful to watch, knowing there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Gelbrun had called Stoick a "dragonlover", pouring as much disdain as he could into the word. Stoick made no attempt to deny it. Why should he. It was true. He had come to love the dragons that made Berk their home. They had become so helpful toward their former tormentors, and so much more than just animals to be ridden. There was now a true friendship between the Hairy Hooligans and the dragons. Even many of those who originally hated the idea of dragons and Vikings co-existing together had now come to realize that they were wrong. There were a few hold-outs, but even they could not deny that since Hiccup and his Night Fury, Toothless, had brought about the destruction of the Red Death and the end of the dragon war, Berk had prospered in ways it never had before, due to the involvement of dragons in day-to-day life. Gelbrun was a fool not to see reason. Nartara could become just as prosperous. The need for raiding other villages for supplies and food would no longer exist. Tribes could truly be united.

Had it not been for Toram, one of Gelbrun's personal guards, deciding that he would not blindly follow Gelbrun in his clearly insane plans, and made it possible for Stoick to escape with the dragon Toram had just bonded with, he might still be chained up in that dungeon. Stoick sincerely hoped that Toram would be able to stay out of the way when things turned ugly. He would hate to see the man killed.

Just because the raid was not to be focused on the people, Stoick was no fool. He knew that Gelbrun would put as many innocent people between himself and the raiders from Berk as he could, and even though great effort would be taken to spare as many lives as possible, deaths would not be avoidable. The best hope was that Tarina's gamble would work in her favor. If it did, and the people of Nartara would stand beside her, the collateral damage would be significantly less, assuming she could get to her father quickly.

Stoick felt like he was growing soft. He had led many raids in the past, before he became Chief. Spitelout took over those duties after the fact. It was different back then. The dragons constantly took livestock and destroyed houses and storage buildings. Raids were needed to keep the village fed and defended. But since Hiccup had ended the dragon wars, and Dragons were now a part of Berk's way of life, there was no longer a need for raids. This one was on Gelbrun's head, and he was going to make sure that the mad chief understood that.

Stoick sighed. It was dark outside now, and he needed sleep. But first he wanted to go for a ride on Thornado, touring the village for what might be the last time. Nothing was certain, after all. He went outside, and around back where Thornado made himself at home in a sturdy corral. Sturdy by human standards. If the Thunderdrum wanted to, he could turn it into splinters with one blast of his sonic attack. But Thornado trusted Stoick, and Stoick had come to trust his dragon as well. Their bond was not as strong as the one between his

son and his Night Fury, but then, the circumstances of the bonding were completely different.

He took his time to saddle Thornado, and by the time they had taken to the air, it was well after dark. They flew a circuit around the village. Stoick wasn't expecting trouble, and he did not find any. He was just wanting to enjoy the peace of flying on a dragon, letting his mind be at ease. As he was making his return to home, he spied Hiccup and Astrid descending towards the Hofferson house. He landed Thornado on a nearby rise and watched. They had placed their hands on each other's shoulders and kissed. Stoick nodded to himself. In spite of the two youths' efforts to pretend that nothing was going on, he knew better and was glad of it. He always admired Astrid's dedication to duty and honor. She would indeed make a good wife for his son. He watched as the two young lovers rested their foreheads together and spoke quietly to each other for a few minutes. He watched as Astrid went inside and Hiccup climbed back onto Toothless' back and took off.

Stoick took to the air again, and he and Thornado fell in beside his son and Toothless.

"Good evening, son," Stoick called

Hiccup jumped at the shout. "Dad. Hi. Uh... Hi, dad. uh... Dad, hi."

Stoick laughed. "Sorry to startle you. I was wondering if I could have a word?"

Hiccup nodded, "I'm headed home. I'll heat up some water for tea."

Stoick nodded back, and they descended to Hiccup's house. Thornado crouched down on the front lawn, while Hiccup, Stoick and Toothless went inside. At a gesture from Hiccup, Toothless produced a small jet of whitefire, lighting the firepit. Hiccup poured water into the kettle hanging over the fire and sat down, removing his prosthetic and rubbing the stump of his leg. "What's on your mind, Dad?"

"I just wanted to spend some time with you, son," the older man said, "We don't get to see much of each other. It never has felt the same since you moved out of the house."

"I know, dad," Hiccup said. "I've missed you, too." It wasn't too long ago when neither of them would have admitted feelings like that. But Hiccup had achieved a lot and had won the admiration and respect of the village. And Stoick could not have been more proud of him even had he been the beefy Viking warrior he once thought he should have been.

"Tomorrow will be your first raid, son," Stoick said, matter-of-factly. "How do you feel about it?"

Hiccup shrugged. "It doesn't feel like a raid. Not really. We'll be providing air support and trying to spot potential dangers to you and the other raiders. We've trained for it. And it isn't anything any different from what we've had to do with other threats. I just don't want to see innocent people hurt."

Stoick shook his head. "It's not going to be the same. Gelbrun and his warriors were as effective at fighting dragons as we used to be. We brought down many of them during the war. So did they."

Hiccup nodded. "So have Alvin and his Outcasts. We've faced them in combat and have managed to come through unscathed. Believe me, Dad. I am well aware of the potential danger. Every dragon rider coming on this raid has been put through though their paces. We've got this."

Stoick sighed. "I just needed to hear you say it, so I can hear how you would say it. I hear the confidence, and I am proud. You will make a fine chief."

Hiccup's eyes widened. "Thanks, Dad."

The kettle began whistling above the fire, and Hiccup fetched cups and scooped some green tea powder into them. The hot water was poured in and he used a mixing brush to stir the powder into the water. Trader Johann had brought a generous quantity of the stuff the last time he visited Berk. He said it came all the way from some place called China. Not that the Vikings particularly cared where it came from, so long as Johann would be able to deliver more. It was something new, and Berk had become all about new.

Stoick and his son sat before the fire and sipped their tea in silence, enjoying the calm before the coming storm.

O O O

Jarin and Tarina held each other close, kissing passionately as Shadowhorn dozed peacefully nearby. They had been in the clearing above the cove for quite some time, their campfire burning low. This was potentially the last night they both might be alive, and they intended to live it to the fullest, together. The stars were bright and the forest sounds all around them were calming. And they truly did need the calm. Tomorrow Tarina would set out with Stoick on his ship, for a three-day voyage to Nartara. On the third day, the dragons would fly from Berk and arrive as the ships would be approaching the island. Then it would begin, and not end until Gelbrun was defeated.

But for now, it was time for love.

Jarin had no family. So who he married was his choice, and nobody had the right to say otherwise. As for Tarina, she didn't really care what her father thought of the matter. In a few days, his opinion of anything would be rendered completely moot. So she had no qualms whatsoever about her relationship with Jarin. In spite of their passionate activities for the past hour, they had kept themselves pure. Both were committed to maintaining their virginity until they would be properly married, after the raid was over and Nartara was liberated from Gelbrun's madness. They would consummate their marriage then, according to tradition. It was decided.

Jarin remembered back to the first time he and Tarina spent an evening with each other as a true couple. She was so worried about how he would behave, and with the way things he had heard had gotten in Nartata, he understood why. An almost animalistic way of life had begun to take hold of the more unsavory types, and the number of

unsavory types had increased significantly. When your leader is insane and does not care about justice, such things are to be expected. Taking a maiden's virtue without consent had become an increasingly regular practice. So when Jarin first embraced Tarina, she was trembling with fear.

"_I'm not going to hurt you, Tarina," he said to her. "I love you. I will lay down my life for you. I will _never_ take advantage of you, or even dream of taking your virtue from you. I love your purity. I love your gentle spirit. The day I ever violate you is the day I would pray to be struck down. You are the lady of my life, and I hope to be the man of your heart. In my arms you will know only peace and love. On my life I swear this."_

She looked at him with eyes filled with wonder. She had never known anyone to say such things. She looked into his eyes and saw only honesty. She surrendered to him and he was true to his word. He kissed her in a way that conveyed total commitment and love, and he caressed her with a gentle touch that screamed desire but was tempered with discipline. In his embrace she truly felt at peace and she knew that the love he had for her was genuine. She trusted him and he did not betray that trust. She knew beyond doubt that if they were to marry, the love between them would be served and that they would be true to each other, and so would truly be made whole.

Now, tonight, they made their love clear to each other, pledging themselves to each other, as if speaking marriage vows. If either of them were to die in the coming battle, they would die knowing the depth of the love they had for each other. But the promise of what was surely to come if both survived was enough to encourage both to do all they could to ensure survival. They desired each other above anything the world offered. And they would have each other. But they would do it the right way. For tonight, the love they had was sufficient.

Eventually they settled down to rest in each other's arms, leaning against Shadowhorn's slumbering form. It was late, now. Neither of them wanted to get up to return to the village. So they rested there, holding each other, basking in the calm before the storm...

* * *

><p>Okay... I know I said that the fluff was over, but I needed to actually get some romance time between my original characters. I think it should be clear that while I like playing around with the romantic involvement between Astrid and Hiccup, I am not going to take their relationship to any higher level. The story I am telling is intended to mesh with the official stories in a believable manner. We do not know for sure the direction the writers of the shows and the next movie are going to take Astrid and Hiccup. So I prefer not to step on their toes. My original characters on the other hand are mine to do with as I see fit.

Please offer your review.

The next chapter will be called "Distant Thunder" and will be from at least Toram's perspective. A little more from the point of view of the Nartaran rebels in past due.

Thanks for reading. Be belessed

8. Chapter 8 - A Distant Thunder

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon".

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Eight â€“
A Distant Thunder**

Toram paced back and forth as he listened to the resistance underground's leaders lay out their plans for the coming attack on Gelbrun the Mad. It made him nervous, as there were a lot of variables that could change unexpectedly. The plans were good, and were prepared in such a way that they could be executed to coincide with the raid on Berk which had to happen very soon. While there was no limit to how long a chief could delay in taking vengeance on another chief, the more prideful the wronged chief, the sooner he would strike. And Stoick, while being honorable and fair, was as prideful as they came.

Toram figured that by the end of the week, a lasting change would occur. The question was, who would be in charge when the dust settled? He still hoped that Tarina would return, and would support the resistance. He knew that she and her father were not on friendly terms, and that she had grown restless under the Mad Chief's rule. Where she was and what she would ultimately do were two of those variables that concerned him. If she returned and claimed her bloodbound right to assume control of the tribe, he would abdicate all authority to her. She would lead well... If she returned... And if the resistance was successful.

In his private musings, Toram imagined Tarina arriving with Stoick when Berk's forces arrived. He laughed such dreams off, however. Why would Tarina be involved with Berk other than random chance? It would be too much to hope for.

The meeting dragged on and he finally had to interrupt. "Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, but if I do not return to the fortress soon, I will miss, and that will not do well for any of us."

They stopped their yammering and looked at him, as if seeing him for the first time. "Of course," the baker said. "Thank you for coming."

Toram bowed respectfully and withdrew. His contribution to the meeting had been minimal beyond assuring those gathered that he had managed to keep whisperings of rebellion from Gelbrun's ears. He would not say how, or who was intertwined in his efforts. They did not need to know. One wrongly-spoken word could bring the hammer of Gelbrun's rage down hard, and he had no mind to risk that. There was too much at stake.

He remembered to pick up the deer carcass from the butcher before leaving the meeting site as an alibi if he were asked where he had been. He'd have the cook prepare it for a feast he has arranged for Gelbrun. Gelbrun liked feasts. Especially when someone else was making it possible.

As he made his way back to the fortress, he thought about his own plan for the rebellion. He knew he wasn't alone among the guards in terms of his opinion of Gelbrun. However, the Mad Chief ruled by fear and threats, which he had proven willing to back up with action. He dared not try to recruit them. So he planned to gamble with them. When Berk attacked, he would very bluntly demand that they pick a side between Gelbrun's insanity and the promise of a return to freedom and honorable life. He knew he likely would not be able to sway all of the guards, but he was willing to risk that more would side with him than against him.

Gelbrun had not been idle. He had amassed a great deal of support through fear of pain of death, and every villager with any skills as an artisan had been press-ganged into service creating weapons of war, including devices that he felt could bring down dragons. Toram had no idea where he had gotten hold of the plans for such devices, but while insane, Gelbrun was not stupid. He would not have ordered their construction if he did not believe that they were of use. They would have to be disabled before the battle. Berk needed to get through the defenses, so Gelbrun's attention would be completely on them and not looking to the rear where the rebellion would strike.

He had first shown up at one of their meetings completely unannounced, and almost lost his life as a result. It was risky, but he had to be sure that neither the baker nor his _customer_ had breathed a word about his position in these affairs. He had since attended several meetings. He needed to know what was being planned so he would know how to cover it up so that it would not attract undue attention.

He had a plan that would involved recruiting other personal guards, but he would act on those plans when the rebellion made their move. He wasn't the only one who thought Gelbrun was a fool who needed to be removed. But he could not expect the others to commit until it came right down to it. They had families they would not risk. But with Berk on one side and the rebellion on the other, it would paint a grim picture for Gelbrun, and he was almost certain that most of the other personal guards would come over to his side.

Presently, the rogue named Thal fell into step beside him as he made his way back to the fortress. "So. You've been to one of the meetings, he? If you know what's going on, why do you keep me spying for you?"

"I have my reasons, Thal," Toram said. "Let's leave it at that."

Thal grinned. "Oh, I'm sure. Now far be it from me arouse suspicions, what with what you've been paying me and all, but I think that there's more to your involvement than meets the eye," Thal tugged at his right ear and grinned."

"What?" demanded Toram.

"I want a bigger cut. Otherwise I am going straight to Gelbrun and telling him that you've been attending secret rebellion meetings. He'll surely award me."

Toram shook his head, He hated what he was going to have to do. Thal had been a useful informant, but he knew too much, and too much was at stake. "That won't be necessary. I think I can afford a cut that should take care of you."

Thal's grin grew larger, which Toram did not think was possible. "I knew you could be reasonable. How soon can you deliver the cut?"

Toram met Thal's eyes with a grin as he drew his dagger, which had the reputation of being kept razor sharp. "Right now," he said as he slit Thal's throat in one fluid, lightning-fast motion. He took out a fancy goblet from his pack and put it inside Thal's own pack. "GUARDS!" he shouted.

A moment later a member of the town watch came running up. "How can I help you, sir?"

"This man was attempting to make off with stolen goods. I don't know how he managed to get that goblet out of the fortress without being seen, but I noticed him acting suspiciously. He refused to come quietly for questioning and resisted arrest."

"So you killed him?" the guard asked.

Come on, he thought. _Don't try to be guard of the month. Just take my word for it and be about your business. I don't want to have to kill you, too._ He thought fast. "You know how intolerant Gelbrun has become concerning thieves. He'd have called for his head. But since he wouldn't come quietly, the end result is the same. A dead thief, and we don't even have to waste supplies on feeding him while he would have awaited execution. I'll report the matter directly to Gelbrun himself. Just take care of the corpse, please."

The guard sighed. "Time was that even thieves got a fair trial. But very well."

Toram nodded, leaving the guard to dispose of the grizzly remains,

O O O

"A thief, you say?" asked Gelbrun as he looked Toram up and down.

"Yes, my chief," he said, looking straight ahead.

"A pity that the headsman has been denied a job, but the deed is done."

"Yes, my chief," Toram said,

"And now I have a matter you may be able to shed some light on," Gelbrun said with a smile.

"Oh?" Toram asked.

"Yes," said gelbrun in a disinterested tone. "It recently came to my attention that there is a growing number of individuals with rebellious intent. And what's more, someone within my own immediate sphere of influence is involved."

Toram's heart skipped a beat and he resisted the urge to swallow hard. "Oh?" he asked. "Any idea who, so I can go deal with them?"

Gelbrun's grin persisted and there was a mischievous glint in his eyes. "As a matter of fact, there is." he fixed Toram with an icy stare. "You!"

Oh great Odin's ghost, Toram thought. "What?" he exclaimed, feigning incredulity. "Who in the name of Loki has dared to suggest such a thing?"

It was Gelbrun's turn to shake his head. "Don't bother to deny it, Toram. I am not stupid. I learned about your clandestine activities weeks ago. I am not stupid. Thal has been a good servant. I am not stupid. I made sure to make use of some of the unsavory types to get information. I am not stupid. But you certainly have proven to be... GUARDS!"

No fewer than ten of Gelbrun's personal guard stepped out from behind the columns of the great hall, with swords drawn, positioning themselves between Toram and Gelbrun.

"Take this traitor to the dungeon. Do not feed him. Let him languish until he is near death, and then the headsman shall have a duty to perform."

"Yes, my chief," the leader of the guards said as he relieved Toram of his sword.

"I'm not stupid... I'm not stupid... I'm not stupid... I'm not stupid... I'm not stupid... I'm not stupid... " Gelbrun said the same thing over and over as Toram was led from the great hall.

O O O

"READY THE SHIPS!" shouted Stoick the Vast.

The next hour was a practice of precision as warriors chosen personally by Spitelout marched to the docks, some assisting with the loading of supplies and siege engines. They would set sail today, And in three days hence, Vengeance and Justice would both be saitisfied.

Stoick looked out to sea and saw with minot trepidation that forbodung dark stormclouds were gathering on the horizon. _This will not be an easy crossing_, he noted to himself as he became aware of the rumbling of a distant thunder.

9. Chapter 9 - Torrential Downpour

I neither own nor claim any rights to How To Train Your Dragon

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Nine â€œ
Torrential Downpour**

The small fleet from Berk set sail a little after mid-day, and a three-day journey lay ahead. The lead ship carried Tarina, the unnamed Majestic Flamescale who carried Stoick away from Gelbrun's dungeon, a small contingent of warriors serving as Stoick's honor guard, Sotick himself and his Thunderdrum, Thornado. It was bound to be an eventful crossing, what with the gathering storm on the horizon.

Hiccup and the rest of the Riders of Berk remained behind. They would set out on the third day, traveling at the speed allowed by their dragons, which would mean that they would catch up with the fleet just as Nartara would be coming into sight on the horizon. At least, that was the plan. However, the adverse weather conditions looming before them threatened to complicate matters.

It was getting dark, much too early and much too quickly for Stoick's liking. And the clouds seemed to be getting darker at the same rate. This storm would likely be the worst he had seen since he was a child, huddling in the corner of his room as lightning blazed and thunder crashed in the dead of night. His father and mother had both been away on a raid and he was alone. He was no coward. He wasn't really scared of the lightning or the thunder. It was the feeling of isolation that scared him, because he knew that the thunder and roar of the torrential downpour was so loud that if he were to need to call out to anyone they would not hear him. He did not call out to anyone. He just sat in the corner, staring straight ahead, wrapped up in the deafening cacophony, and waiting for it to end. Because when it ended, the normal sounds of life on Berk would return and the sense of isolation would end.

Stoick had to admit that while he was chained in Gelbrun's dungeon, practically ignored most days, the weight of the isolation might have overwhelmed him, were it not for the Monstrous Nightm... no Majestic Flamescale... that was chained to the wall across from him. It was completely indifferent to him, but was at least a living being, and a reminder the Dragons of Berk, which he had become so familiar with. This was one of the reasons why it enraged him so to see the dragon treated so brutally, given equal weight with the fact that it was an intelligent and sensitive creature that did not deserve the cruel hand life had dealt it. And to rub salt in the proverbial wound, it rankled him that it had not been so long ago that he himself would have thought nothing of the pain inflicted on dragons at the hands of Vikings. Hiccup's more sensitive side had clearly rubbed off on him. Not that it meant he was growing weak and soft. When you actually open your eyes you cannot help but become more sensitive to everything. Stoick's eyes were opened the day he knelt next to the Night Fury and watched as he opened his wings to reveal Hiccup's unconscious form. The most dangerous dragon of all had saved his son. He had been so wrong and so blind, driven by rage.

Like Gelbrun...

No... NOT like Gelbrun. That man delighted in the misery of others, for misery's sake. And he, Stoick, could never see himself becoming like that. But who was he fooling? He disowned his son who was only trying to show a better way for everyone, just so he could proudly march off to kill more dragons. And when that monster... that Red Death... reared its ugly head, its roar took him back to that day as a child, huddling in the corner of his room, alone and powerless.

And now they were sailing into the storm.

KABLAMMMMMM!

The first massive lightning bolt struck the ocean nearby, the thunder blast shaking him to the core.

"And so it begins," he said, more to himself than to anyone else, as a torrential downpour started to fall...

O O O

The guards led Toram down to to the dungeon, where he knew that torture and starvation would await him, until Gelbrun would decide to end his life as painfully as he could. But as they crossed the threshold, the trailing guard slammed the door behind him and removed his helmet.

"Thor in a thinderstorm, Toram," he said. "You've really put your foot in it this time."

"Baelir?" Toram asked with apparent surprise. "What in the name of Loki's shifty left eye are you doing down here?"

Baelir grinned. "Saving your butt, of course!"

Toram narrowed his eyes. "Why?"

"Oh, great Odin's ghost, Toram." Baelir said, rolling his eyes. "We've had it with Gelbrun and his garbage. There is not a single guard who isn't walking on eggshells around the fool. Not for themselves, but for their families. We've been aware of the resistance for a while, and we've been aware that you've been aware of it and have done nothing to stop their plans. So we have concluded that you're involved, and we want in as well. No. We are in, as of today. The access tunnel is guarded on the other end by friends. We're going to walk right out of here, right now, and lose ourselves in the woods. Not that it matters. The guards Gelbrun will send out will put on a fine show of looking for us," He grinned, "Everywhere but where we are."

The other guards removed their helmets, and Toram couldn't help but grin. "Gurdy!"

The guard in question returned the grin. "Just like old times, eh Tor?"

Toram shook his head at the irony. These two men were his closest compatriots while they were in guard training several years ago. Time and duty had separated them, but on this night, here they were. And for the first time, Toram thought, rebellion couldn't potentially be more fun._ He looked to the other guard. "And who are you?"

"Him?" asked Baelir. "That's Barr. He'll empty your coin purse in a game of dice quicker than you can say 'boo,' but there's not a man I would want watching my back more than him... Except for you, of course."

Toram extended his hand. "Well, Barr, you come highly recommended.

Glad to have you."

Barr accepted his hand with a firm grip. "Is it true that you once stole a drill instructor's underwear?"

The other two stifled a laugh and Toram blanched. "As a matter of fact I did. I received a solid caning for it and was sentenced to mucking out the pigpen for a month."

"He sure did," said Baelir

"But the look on old Crabback's face when he came out of the lake after his weekly bath with his underwear nowhere in sight was so worth it."

The three erupted in laughter and Barr grinned.

"Well," said Toram, "we had best get started before Gelbrun decides to come down here and gloat."

With that, they made their way over to the wall hiding the access tunnel. One of the guards produced a key and inserted it into a cleverly hidden keyhole, and the wall rolled aside. Ironical that Toram would be escaping through the same tunnel he helped Stoick escape through. Suddenly a wave of loneliness washed over him. Stoick had escaped on the back of the very dragon Toram had bonded with only a few moments before. He longed to see the creature again. Hopefully, soon, if all went well, he would.

O O O

They made their way by night stealthily into the woods, careful not to be seen by any of the townspeople. Some of them were still loyal to Gelbrun and would sell them out if they had a chance. Of course, Gelbrun would have to do the hunting himself, now that the guards had collectively agreed to no longer follow the mad chief's orders. Who would threaten their families? Any guard ordered to take an innocent life would march dutifully towards the intended victim, draw their blade, do an about-face and stand guard. Gelbrun would have to do his own dirty work going forward.

What worried Toram was that Gelbrun might use his charismatic personality to sway enough of the townspeople over to his side. The man was insane but he knew how to encourage loyalty. And there were plenty of weak-willed people in the populace who would be gullible enough to be drawn in by the mad chief's manipulations. All it would take would be for Gelbrun to put swords in their hands and the very collateral damage he hoped could be avoided would be going on all around him.

They ran through the forest, sloping ever upward to a rise that would allow them to see pretty much everything, including the sea. Toram looked out in the direction he knew that Berk's forces would be coming at any time. On the distant horizon he saw the rapid flashes of lightning that could only be a terrible storm. One which Stoick's forces were likely sailing right into.

Odin help them, he thought, and wondered if it did any good. Was Odin even real? Was Thor? Were there really many gods watching over different aspects of existence? Was there only one? Did gods even

exist at all? In just a few days, he figured there was a good chance he would be finding out first-hand.

* * *

><p>I know it's been a while. I've been pretty busy lately and haven't been able to get into the proper headspace for the story. It was a slow day at work today, and the completion of this chapter was the result. If you've been reading, I sincerely thank you.

Be blessed

10. Chapter 10 - To Reap the Whirlwind

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Ten â€" To Reap the Whirlwind**

After two days of thunder and lightning and waves that threatened to tear the ships apart, the weather finally settled down and the third day of their journey was dawning gray. Stoick and Tarina stood at the bow of the ship and looked out across the water. It would not be long now before the shores of Nartara would be visible on the horizon. It also would not be long before the Riders of Berk would arrive to begin their air raid on the island, once Stoick and his warriors had set foot on the beach.

It would make for a very impressive display of dragon air superiority. The people of Nartara were used to dealing with dragon raids, but they had never faced dragons carrying Viking riders on their backs, with coordination between instinct and training. Stoick was no fool. He knew that he could not expect the people of Nartara to break and run just because they would be facing the destructive force of dragons driven by human intelligence.

There... Land on the horizon... Nartara. Tarina shuddered as she beheld her home from afar. What if she was wrong? What if the people, out of fear, sided with her father? She had been gone too long. What if Gelbrun's poisonous tongue had named her traitor and stripped away any credibility she might have when making her challenge. The death of her mother and brother might have driven her father mad, and he might have become the worst leader Nartara had ever known, but he was still her father. She did not want to see him killed. Stoick, knowing full well how personal loss could threaten one's sanity, was willing to give her plan a chance before he acted on his right of vengeance.

"Now we come to it," she said to herself.

"Aye," Stoick responded. "We're about to find out if all of our preparations were enough. I just want you to know that whatever happens, I-

"Stoick!" The shout came from behind and Stoick turned his attention to one of his warriors who was looking off to the side and pointing,

his face ashen at what he was seeing. "SHIPS!"

Stoick saw them. A fleet twice the size of his. "I thought you said that Nartara didn't have a navy!" he said to Tarina.

"We haven't, ever since my father sent the entire fleet looking for the dragon's nest before the raids stopped. Only three ships returned. I have no idea whose ships those are."

Stoick nodded. This was one of those unexpected variables he had been concerned about. Since his escape from Gelbrun's dungeon, a lot of time had passed. Enough for the mad chief to make preparations. It wasn't enough time to build a flee, so these must be allies Gelbrun had managed to secure. Berk had enough enemies scattered throughout the islands who would jump at an opportunity to side against him.

The captain of the ship stepped forward. "Sir, at the rate they are moving, they will intercept us before we reach Nartara."

"About the time Hiccup and his Riders are set to arrive?" Stoick was hopeful.

The captain considered the question. "Possibly. Those ships have a favorable wind. It will be close."

A short time later, the ships had come close enough that, through the captain's spyglass, Stoick could make out some of the details. And what he saw made his throat clinch. "It's Alvin's outcasts!"

O O O

Toram watched the two fleets converging towards each other, one on course for Nartara and the other with clear intent to put itself in front of the first. "Outcasts! When did Gelbrun open a dialogue with them?"

Baelir shook his head. "Who can say? You yourself said that since Stoick the Vast escaped Gelbrun began sending out messages by every means possible. And you know he received many envoys from different places. Alvin the Treacherous would not have come personally, Nartara would not have suffered his presence."

Toram nodded. "Alvin must have done his negotiating by proxy. Someone posing as a mercenary or a pirate. What concerns me more is what did Gelbrun offer the outcasts in return for their support?"

Baelir nodded, "Indeed. Outcast island has no real export capabilities. They are isolated. No respectable tribe would trade with them. It wouldn't surprise me if the mad chief offered to be an exception. Of course, that would turn the other tribes against Nartara, hurting Gelbrun's interests in the long term."

Toram stroked his beard thoughtfully. "As if Gelbrun would care. He stopped thinking ahead a long time ago. It's all about what he can get _now._ And right now, he needs to be able to keep Stoick off his back."

"Barr!" he said, turning to one the other soldiers. "Get word to the others. Berk's dragons have not arrived with the ships, but I have no

doubt they will be here soon. They need to begin making their move to sabotage those dragon-killing machines."

"Yes, sir!" Barr shouted as he turned away to carry out his instructions.

"It's no secret that Alvin the Treacherous and Stoick the Vast have a history," Toram said. And now that the outcasts are here, it's a pretty good bet that Gelbrun got the plans for those infernal weapons from them."

O O O

Riding Toothless, Hiccup led the Riders of Berk over the ocean. Astrid on Stormfly followed immediately behind him, flanked on both sides by Snoutlout on Hookfang and Jarin on Shadowhorn. Immediately behind and in formation were Ruffnut and Tuffnut on Barf and Belch. Fishlegs and Meatlug were not to be seen. They had taken off at the same time, but had since fallen behind. A Gronckle could not keep up with a Zippleback, Nadder, two Flamescales and a Night Fury. Not when speed was of the essence. Of course, none of the dragons in formation could fly faster than a Night Fury, but the fastest pace of the slowest of these was sufficient for their needs. Fishlegs would arrive late, but he would not be missing the party.

The twins looked at each other with a wild grin on their faces. For the first time in a long time, they were not arguing with each other. They were saving their energy for the real fun. Once they were over Nartara, it would be time for them to make some mayhem. And making mayhem was what they did best. They knew it. Hiccup knew it. All of Berk knew it, and soon all of Nartara would know it as well.

They had been flying since dawn, and they would not be too far behind the raid fleet from Berk as it would reach Nartara. Hiccup had a feeling that something was wrong, and that feeling was growing. He had had feelings like this before and had learned not to ignore them.

"Astrid!" he called over his shoulder. "Move up!"

Astrid did as instructed, lightly nudging Stormfly faster to catch up. "What's wrong, Hiccup?"

"I'm not sure. I've got a bad feeling and I want to check it out. Slide back between Snotlout and Jarin and tell them to stay on course, then follow me as quickly as possible."

"Got it!" She fell back into formation to let the others know what was going on.

"Alright, bud," Hiccup said, patting Toothless on the shoulder. "Let's push it!" Toothless let out an excited screech and gathered himself for maximum speed.

Hiccup and Toothless were almost out of sight before Astrid had finished instructing the others to hold course and speed. She kicked Stormfly into maximum speed, leaving the Flamescale and Zippleback riders behind.

O O O

The Outcast ships were now three quarters of the way between Stoick's fleet and where they were first sighted. It would not be long before they would intercept. This was going to get ugly really fast. Stoick was about to open his mouth to say so, when he heard a distant whistling which abruptly grew to a scream.

"Night Fury!" someone shouted.

"Get down!" someone else groaned.

A blur of black streaked overhead and swung around, slowing as it did. A moment later Toothless touched down gently on the deck, and Hiccup dismounted.

"What are you doing here, son?" Asked Stoick.

Hiccup patted Toothless on the shoulder and turned to face his father. "I had a really bad feeling that something might be wrong. And it looks like I was right," he said looking out towards the outcast ships. He motioned Stoick over to him and then spoke in hushed tones so as not to be overheard by anyone else. "Dad, I know that you wanted to make a traditional landing on Nartara, but the Outcast fleet changes everything. I strongly recommend that you get on Thornado. I'll fly Tarina over to the other ship so she can get on Brokenclaw. There won't be any landing on Nartara unless we can turn that fleet back."

At that moment, Astrid arrived on Stormfly and they set down next to Toothless.

Stoick looked at his son, then at Astrid, then back. "I think I'll follow your recommendation, son," he said quietly. Then he turned his attention to the warriors on deck. "Alright! I am taking Thornado up with Hiccup, Astrid and Tarina. We will do as much damage as we can to the Outcast fleet. The ships will continue on to Nartara!"

The Viking yelled their acknowledgment, and Stoick turned towards the stern, where Thornado was sheltered. "Time to go to work, boy," he said as he climbed on the Thunderdrum's back.

Hiccup gave Tarina a quick ride across to one of the other ships, and she made her way to the back where Brokenclaw was hunkered down, clearly not pleased with sea travel. When he saw her, he perked up. He spread his wings and some rays that made their way through the overcast made the metallic orange streaks on his sides seem to blaze like fire. Tarina never got tired of seeing that. She climbed up into the saddle and signaled the old Flamescale to take to the air...

"Hiccup," called Stoick. "What is the status of the rest of the dragon force?"

"Sticking to the plan. We can begin the assault on the fleet. Snotlout, Jarin and the twins will be joining us shortly. Once they see what we are doing, they'll know what to do."

"And Fishlegs?" Stoick asked.

"He'll be here right on time for the main event," Hiccup

responded.

"Good. I have lead!"

"Dad, I'm not sure that's-"

Stoick cut him off. "I HAVE LEAD!"

Hiccup did not feel slighted. This mission was mainly to maintain his father's honor and dignity. Already, the chief had to forgo traditional raiding tactics. He was not about to allow any part of this to be led by anyone else. "I've got your back, Dad," he said.

"Listen up!" Stoick shouted. "The Outcast sail with the wind. Blast the sails to ash. They will be forced to use oars. If you see any dragon-killing weapons on their decks, do what you can to take them out. Do NOT let yourself get taken down. Understand?"

"Yo!" they all shouted at once.

"LET'S DO THIS!"

Stoick took point, with Hiccup immediately behind him, with Tarina on the left and Astrid on the right. They turned towards the Outcast fleet. "BREAK AND ENGAGE!" Stoick roared.

Four dragons split off and engaged a unique lead ship. Fire burning the sails of three and a Thunderdrum's sonic blast shattering the main mast of the fourth.

"Hey Alvin!" Stoick yelled at the outcast leader as he swept by "You should have minded your own business!"

O O O

Alvin the Treacherous stomped in fury and shook his fist at Stoick. His spy in Berk said that the Dragons were not going to be coming until later. Yet here they were now. At least some of them. The most dangerous among them. They were not in position to use the dragon-killing devices properly. If things went the way he was assured they would, the idea was to position the fleet between Nartara and Berk's vessels, with the dragon-killing machines positioned for best effect so they could take down at least some of the dragons.

The irony of it was that those machines were based on the schematics made by Hiccup himself. The spy had managed to smuggle them off Berk months ago, and they were surprisingly easy to make.

He realized that several of them were now either burning or obliterated. _That's alright,_ he thought. _There's more on Nartara._

O O O

Tarina swung around for another pass, and began a dive towards an outcast ship. At the last second, she became aware of a spear launcher on the deck of another ship discharging a sharp-pointed projectile right at her, She tried to pull up, but wasn't fast

enough, it ripped through Brokenclaw's wing and the dragon roared in pain. What altitude that was gained began to be lost. She could not turn around and go back to one of the Berk ships. A Flamescale could not land gracefully with a wound like this. Nartara or the ocean before it would be safer.

"Try to stay with it, Brokenclaw," she said, patting the Flamescale on the neck. "I know it hurts, but we need to try to make it."

The dragon did his best to maintain, and it helped. They were going down, but they had left the sea battle behind and that meant they at least wouldn't be killed by Alvin's Outcasts.

O O O

Tynimon baker discovered that he was far better at warfare than he ever was at baking, and he was really good at baking. He led a group of rebels straight to the nearest Dragon-Killer and had subdued the lad who was manning it before he could even react. Had it been battle-hardened warriors assigned to the weapons, there would have been a challenge. But the army had turned its back on Gelbrun. So he was forced to intimidate the average citizen into doing what he wanted done. And with an outcast presence on Nartara, he had muscle to back up his threats. He looked to his right at the next dragon-killer over and saw a green pennant waved. To his left, he saw the same thing. He looked back to his right, and saw another green pennant. To his left, a red pennant flashed. A second green Pennant indicated that the next weapon over had also been secured. A red pennant meant that it was still held by the enemy.

He and all but one of his group headed over to the machine on the left. The rebels there left one of their group and they all went to the machine that had not been secured yet. There were outcasts manning this one, and they were on the lookout for trouble. But they were not prepared for thirteen rebels to spring out of the bushes at the same time and overpower them. These were outcasts, so simply tying them up and gagging them was not enough. Tynimon had no qualms about slitting their throats. His father had died to an Outcast's sword when he was a lad. Gelbrun might welcome these killers in with open arms, but then he was insane. Tynimon would have none of it.

They had to repeat the process with three of the machines before they were all secured. If anyone came by, they would see them manned, but when the time would come to fire them against Berk's dragons, not a single one would launch.

O O O

Toram was watching the battle at sea, marveling at the precision of the dragon riders as they slowly proceeded to put Alvin's fleet out of commission. Because the lead ships had been disabled first, Berk's ships would be able to reach Nartara. He held a spyglass to his eye and watched with satisfaction as the rebels took the dragon-killing machine by force, succeeding even against outcasts who were manning some of them.

Then a motion caught his eye... A dragon had broken off from the air raid group and seemed to be fighting wildly to stay airborne. It would be going down in the water not too far from the beach at the

base of the hilltop he was on.

"Baelir. Barr," he called. "Follow me. Gurdy, you're in charge until I get back!"

Gurdy nodded as Toram, Bailir and Barr headed down the slope.

"What's up, Toram?" Asked Bailir.

"A dragon is about to go down in the water not far from here. We're going to help the rider out. Outcasts are patrolling the beaches, and I am not about to let one of them take someone from Berk hostage. We hold the dragon-killers so they won't be a problem when Berk's dragon riders approach the shore."

Baelir and Barr nodded in understanding. They did not have to wait long before the Monstrous Nightmare and its rider slammed into the water. The dragon was conscious and began swimming towards shore. Once reaching the beach, it collapsed with a huff and lay there breathing heavily.

Its rider lay hugging the beast's neck and thanking it for doing so well.

"Rider of Berk," Toram began. "As representative of the people's rebellion against Gelbrun, I welcome you to Nartara." The rider looked up and Toram's jaw nearly fell to the sand. "Lady Tarina!" he said, kneeling.

"Toram," she said. "Stand up, please. It's good to see you. I am home, and justice will be done this day. I intend to challenge my father's suitability to lead."

"That was my plan, m'lady," Toram responded.

Tarina arched an eyebrow. "Indeed?" she asked. "Will I have need to challenge you as well?"

Toram's eyes widened. "Of course not. I yield my authority to you, m'Lady."

"Very good. I appoint you as Captain of the Guard. See to it that this dragon is cared for. His wing is injured and he is likely hungry. He'll be wanting fish."

"A Monstrous Nightmare?" he asked in amazement.

"Not anymore," Tarina said. "On Berk, the species has been renamed. They are now called Majestic Flamescales."

"And you rode it. That's awesome!" he responded.

"Indeed it is, Captain. Now please, see to it that he is made comfortable and is fed. Then I need you to fill me in on the state of affairs here. Once Stoick lands on the beach, I want an honor guard ready to receive him, under my authority. And then I have a war to end."

Toram saluted Tarina and went back up the slope to where the rest of

his division of soldiers were. Things had just taken a turn for the better. Tarina was home, and she was on the right side. Now there was a matter of driving these outcasts off the island and then it would be time for Gelbrun to reap the whirlwind.

11. Chapter 11 - Eye of the Storm

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Eleven - Eye of the Storm**

Barr had been chosen to be the one to bring fish to the dragon Tarina had been riding. He was scared to death. What if it decided that it wanted Viking for dinner instead? Scared or not, he had a duty to perform. So he carried the basket of fish down to the dragon, which raised its head and stared at him as he approached.

"Hello there," he said to the massive beast as he approached. "I'm not going to hurt you, okay? I'm just going to bring you this fish. So please don't hurt me."

The dragon cocked its head to the side as if taking in what was said. And when Barr dumped the contents of the basket out on the ground, it began to ravenously devour them.

"Wow," said Barr. "You really do love fish. I always thought beef and mutton were your preferred dish."

The dragon's eyes widened and it snorted. At that moment, the sun briefly came out from behind the clouds, and the metallic-orange streaks on its back and sides blazed to light.

"Beautiful," Barr said, gesturing to the dragon. "I've never really just looked at a dragon. I've always seen your kind as monsters that would kill us unless we killed you first. That's how Gelbrun wanted us to think, but he's caused more harm than most dragon raids I've seen. And to hear about people actually riding your kind? It's made me start to wonder how many more preconceptions we've had for centuries are wrong."

the dragon continued to eat, with a rumbling purr resounding in between swallows. The purr began when Barr used the word "beautiful" in conjunction with an all-encompassing gesture towards it. It didn't seem to react to the rest of what Barr had said, but having come from Berk, a land whose people had become known as fierce dragon fighters, it was likely used to the sentiment.

Barr watched as the dragon finished devouring the fish. It then raised its head and just sat there looking at him, as if waiting to see what he would do next. Barr suddenly had a strong urge to reach out and touch the majestic creature. Where was his fear? It had melted away as he watched the sunlight play off the creature's dazzling markings and listened to it purr contentedly. This was not a horrible monster to be feared and reviled. It was a powerful creature to be respected and honored. He took a tentative step forward and reached out with his hand, palm forward.

The dragon responded by stretching its neck forward so that its snout rested against Barr's palm.

Barr dropped to his knees as a wave of emotion washed over him, seeming to start in his chest and spread outward. The dragon crooned, eyes closed, in response. The two sat like that for several moments before Barr sensed someone behind him. He turned around and saw Tarina watching him. "Lady Tarina," he said, saluting her respectfully.

"Please, just call me Tarina," she said. "I just wanted to congratulate you."

Barr looked confused. "For what?"

Tarina smiled. "The Dragon Bond. There's nothing quite like it that I have yet to experience. And with Brokenclaw, at that. Jarin will be thrilled to hear about it."

"The Dragon Bond?" Barr asked.

"Yes," Tarina replied. "It is an emotional connection made between a dragon and its rider. This one has lived among the people of Berk for a while and has never bonded with anyone. I'm happy for him. And for you."

"You make it sound almost like a marriage," Barr said.

Tarina thought for a moment. "In a way, it is, I guess. In a strictly emotional sense, this dragon is connected to you, and will remain connected so long as he and you are alive. He is your dragon now, and you are his human. You must not think of him as a pet, but rather, as a friend. A brother, even."

Barr's eyes widened. This was a lot to take in. This was life-changing. He welcomed it with open mind and heart.

Tarina took her leave and Barr stood looking with wonder at his dragon... His friend. "Well," he said. "Let's get that wing looked at. I know a good leatherworker who could probably get that stitched up neatly."

The dragon nodded at him.

O O O

The battle against Alvin's fleet raged on. Snotlout, Jarin and the Twins had joined the party, just as Stormfly had exhausted her fire. So they moved in to deal more damage. Most of Alvin's ships were burning now, and it wouldn't be long before there would be little choice for the outcasts but to turn their undamaged ships back.

Stoick was happy with the way things were going. He was concerned about Tarina, of course. But the direction she and Brokenclaw were headed would put her a lot closer to their destination. The dragon might not be able to maintain flight with its injured wing, but he would be a formidable defender on the ground. He would send Jarin to scout for her as soon as the business with the outcast fleet was

concluded.

Thornado had difficulty with his sonic blast on the attack run Stoick had just completed, so it was time to pull out of this part of the battle. He signaled Hiccup, who pulled alongside him. "Thornado's done, son. You're in command of the remainder of this phase. It looks like I'll get to make a traditional landing after all."

Hiccup grinned. He pulled away and gathered the others, minus Astrid who had begun her trip to meet up with Fishlegs, who wouldn't be too much further behind by now. "Alright guys. Last run. Our ships will now be able to pass Alvin's fleet without harm. We'll do as much damage and then we retreat back towards Berk. Phase two will begin soon, and while we won't be doing much attacking in it, we'll be at the forefront when it begins"

They flew their run and took out three more ships, then they reversed course and headed away from the battle. The small fleet from Berk sailed unmolested past the outcast ships.

About twenty minutes later Hiccup led the first wave Dragon Riders towards what looked like eight dots on the horizon, which grew into blobs which became recognizable as Astrid on Stormfly, Fishlegs on Meatlug, and behind them, riders on two of each common dragon type, except for the Gronckles. There were five of them. Phase Two was in position to begin its run.

"Snotlout, Jarin. Get into position with the Flamescales and be ready to move," Hiccup shouted. "Astrid, with the Nadders. Ruff and Tuff with the Zipplebacks. Fishlegs, you and the Gronckle division will bring up the rear. By the time we pass, Alvin's surviving ships will be behind our fleet ready to land behind my father and his warriors and trap them between whatever ground troops are waiting on Nartara. Take them out... Ready, everyone?"

The dragon riders pumped their fists in the air with a cheer to indicate that they were, indeed, ready to go.

"Riders of Berk!" Hiccup shouted, raising his right hand into the air. "FLY!" he screamed, thrusting his raised hand forward. all of the dragons surged forward, passing him and Toothless. "Let's go, bud," he said to the Night Fury. With a burst of speed, he and toothless rushed far ahead. Hiccup pulled back on the handgrips and toothless pulled up into a wide backflip which brought them down immediately in front of the others, where he stayed on the return trip to Nartara.

Sure enough, Alvin's fleet was pursuing his father's ships towards the harbor. Time to freak them out. He and Toothless rushed ahead again.

O O O

Alvin had just finished signaling the rest of his fleet to begin pursuing the Berk ships. He would leave them no escape from this island. The smile on his face melted away as he became aware of that gods-awful screaming sound he had come to recognize so well... So Hiccup and his dragon HADN'T finished with the fight after all... A black blur swept overhead on the way towards Nartara, and towards the dragon-killers that awaited. He only wished he could be there to see

that accursed Night Fury skewered with a spear, fired from a weapon his own best friend had designed. Oh, the irony.

His jubilation was short-lived as ten more dragons swept overhead. this was not good. The dragons moved into position above the Berk fleet. they did not rush over the mainland after all... What sort of raid was this?

A rumbling sound from the air made Alvin turn around. Gronckles. Six of them with riders thundered overhead. But instead of proceeding on to meet up with the others, they dove down at the pursuing Outcast ships and began vomiting lava onto their decks. "NO!" Alvin screamed. he watched as the lava burned through the decks to the water below, causing the ships to take on water and begin to sink. _That does it, _he thought. _Gelbrun, you fool, You are on your own._

O O O

With Alvin's ships behind, and no attacks from land, Stoick's fleet pulled into the Nartaran harbor and tied off at the piers. The warriors from Berk disembarked from the ships and followed Stoick the Vast towards the town. In front of him, there was an assembly of armed men, some clearly soldiers, others clearly civilians. The leader removed his helmet. It was Toram. His companion also removed her helmet. Tarina!

Tarina stepped forward. "Stoick the Vast, Chief of Berk, I welcome you and your honor guard to Nartaran soil, to bear witness to the change of leadership according to Nartaran tradition. The current chief of Nartara has betrayed his own people through neglect and injustice, and has inflicted pain and torment upon intelligent beings who I can with personal experience and authority can say are no longer a threat to him or the people he was meant to protect. On this day, I ask you to join me as I challenge my father, Gelbrun, Chief of Nartata for his position. I understand your grievance with him by reason of his unprovoked imprisonment of your person, and that you came here to see justice done upon him. If my challenge is successful, will you consider that justice to be served?

This was exactly as Stoick and Tarina had agreed to proceed. Being shot down by the outcasts allowed her to make contact with her people and solidify her position in advance. That was more effective than her people seeing her and Stoick arrive together. They truly saw her speaking as one sovereign leader to another.

"I will consider justice served if he renounces his authority and pledges to lift his hand against no other citizen of Berk, dragon or human, for the rest of his life. If he will not so pledge or renounce his position as chief, then war shall be declared by Berk upon his person. We have no quarrel with the citizens of Nartara. we will not raise arms against any who do not raise arms against us."

Tarina nodded. "Then if peace can be between our peoples, then it shall be. And now let all of Nartara see the benefit of such peace..."

That was the signal. Stoick raised both hands into the air, and dragons began to descend. Jarin dismounted from Shadowhorn and strode over to stand before Tarina, who reached out and laid her hands on his shoulders. They kissed and then rested their foreheads

together.

"let all assembled know that I will take this man, Jarin of Berk, Senior Dragonrider and Intermediate Trainer of the Berk Dragon Training Academy, to be my husband, as a token of both love and for the sealing of a peace treaty between our two peoples for as long as we shall both live."

They kissed again, and the people from Berk and Nartara cheered.

"Stoick the Vast," Tarina spoke again. "You have in your position something which belongs to one of my people, and I would see it returned. Toram, Captain of the Nartatan Guard, step forward!"

Toram stepped forward with a quizzical look on his face. "Chief Stoick?"

Stoick grinned. "A while back you leant me something and today I am pleased to see it returned to you."

Toram watched as the warriors from Berk parted, revealing Hiccup astride what could only be a Night Fury, leading a Monstrous Nightmare... no... A Majestic Flamescale as Tarina said they were now called. His Majestic Flamescale. He found himself overwhelmed with joy as he ran towards the dragon. The dragon, saw Toram and picked up pace, his eyes wide and bright with happy recognition, the two bond-companions reunited after all these weeks. "He looks wonderful, Chief Stoick. I remember how hurt he seemed before, Thank you."

Stoick laughed. "No lad. Don't thank me. I nearly rode him to death getting back to Berk. But thanks to Jarin, he has recovered completely and is as healthy as he has likely ever been."

Toram turned towards Jarin and extended his hand, which Jarin firmly clasped. "Thank you, Sir,"

Jarin nodded. "It was an honor to be of service."

Tarina spoke again. "I need to announce that we will have to be keeping Brokenclaw," she smiled at the way Jarin's eyes widened. "Aside from an injury to his wing, he has bonded with one of my people, and it would not be right to separate them."

Jarin grinned. "Indeed not. He came to Berk from Dragon Island of his own free will, and he is free to go as he pleases. It is ironic that the three people of Nartara to bond with a dragon have all bonded Flamescales. Two of them having endured pain at the desire of your father."

Tarina nodded. "And now that these formalities are over, and we've all enjoyed a moment of peace in the eye of the storm, Let us finish what we all have begun. Let us find my father and put an end to the madness!"

The masses assembled, both native of Nartara and visitor from Berk, cheered. This now united force would hunt down the remaining outcasts and then move on the fortress. The winds of battle were about to pick up again, and they were about to walk directly into the gale. And

they were ready.

12. Chapter 12 - Day of Reckoning

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Twelve â€œ
Day of Reckoning**

"Just where do you think _you're_ going?"

Gelbrun stopped in his tracks. Nareg, the outcast warrior that Alvin left to ensure that the deals were all honored, stood in his path. The torchlight making the claw-scars on the man's face stand out. "I'm getting out of here, Nareg," he said.

"Oh no you don't," the large outcast said, hefting the heavy war hammer he never seemed to put down the whole time he had been there. "Alvin suspected that you would try to bug out on us the first chance you got. And he was right. Only it ain't gonna happen!"

Gelbrun scowled. "You fool. Can't you see what's going on? Your great leader's fleet is burning on the water. All your outlying outposts have been overrun by _peasants!_ And now that dragon-loving Berk-trash is marching behind _my own daughter_ towards this fortress. If we do not leave now, we are both dead men!"

"Shut your yap, madman!" Nareg snapped. "We outcasts play for keeps. There are others who would benefit from seeing Stoick and his dragon-riding rabble put down. You made deals with Alvin, and Alvin made deals with Lord Daggur, whose fleet should be arriving today. And just so you know, those deals do not involve you. In one fell swoop, Stoick and his best dragon trainers will be eliminated, Nartara will be taken by Daggur's forces, and the icing on the cake... it will be handed over to Alvin."

Gelbrun started to cackle maniacally again. "_Lord_ Daggur? He's calling himself a lord? What bad comedy. He's insane."

Nareg raised an eyebrow. "You're one to talk."

"I am _not_ insane," whined Gelbrun. "Everyone is just jealous because the Voices don't speak to them!"

Nareg failed to stifle a laugh. "Oh, that's rich. Now get back to your chambers and stay there. The last scene of this little drama is about to play out, and it would be in your best interests to play your tiny little part. However, if you even think of trying to run away again, I won't hesitate to shatter your spine with Helga here!" he hefted the warhammer again for good measure. "Take him away!"

O O O

Shut behind the doors of his own chambers, Gelbrun paced back and forth, mumbling to himself. When had he lost control, exactly? He thought back. Ah yes. It started as soon as he put his mark to the treaty between himself and Alvin. The outcast leader had turned to

leave and ordered that over-grown yak of a warrior, Nareg, to take charge, telling him to keep Gelbrun under control.

Gelbrun had protested vehemently, and Alvin laughed at him. "You pathetic piece of trash," he had said. "This problem you are facing is one you caused for yourself when you lured Stoick here and imprisoned him. Your foolish waste of resources has left you vulnerable. You agreed that my people will have safe harbor here if we need it, and that trade will commence upon the defeat of Stoick and his invading force. Well, guess what, madman: I've taken stock of what you have to offer, and while the potential is there, you have nothing to show. So yes. We'll solve your problem for you, and then we'll... heheh... help you and your people get your productivity in order. Until then, We are in control, and you will stay quietly out of sight."

They didn't call him Alvin the Treacherous for nothing. Technically, the letter of the treaty was being obeyed, but Alvin had immediately turned it around to serve his needs. He called out to the Voices, begging them to tell him what to do.

The Voices were silent then. And they were silent now. He looked up to the ceiling and bent his knees. "Whatever god is the true God, please! Hear me. I am lost. Please save me! Please show me what to do!" Suddenly, something snapped in his brain.

What have I done? Tarina, my precious girl. Forgive me.

It had been a long time since he had thought of Tarina as his precious girl. His wife and son were alive, then. He had an heir and a legacy that would live on beyond his lifespan. Tarina would have grown up and married a man from another tribe, solidifying a bond of friendship and peaceful trade. But when that bloody dragon killed his wife and son, he lost himself, and had never managed to find himself again, until today.

He felt faint as he stumbled towards a chair and collapsed into it. Everything went dark.

O O O

He found himself in a beautiful meadow, and surrounded by Monstrous Nightmares. And he recognized them. They were the ones he had captured and watched being tortured until they succumbed to the pain and infection of wounds left untreated, thirst and starvation. They looked at him, not with accusing stares, but with eyes that held only pity. He found himself overcome with remorse for what he had caused these creatures to endure.

"My beloved Gelbrun," came a voice he thought he would never hear again. He slowly turned, and there she stood, wearing a gleaming white robe. His beloved Andrina. He fell to his knees and began to sob. Andrina placed a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"Am I dead?" He looked into his wife's eyes, tears still flowing from his.

She shook her head. "No, my love. Not yet. You have been the puppet of the servants of the Evil One for some time. You opened your heart to hatred and invited the chains which bound you. This is the first

day since then that you are free."

He knew her words were true. He understood them, but here in this place, it was like he can sense the truth in her mind. It would be impossible to tell a lie here. Then, one of the dragons spoke to him.

"In my last days, I cursed your name and dreamed of your death, father of my dearest friend Gelb, but I now rejoice that you have reached out to the Light."

Gelbrun's eyes widened. The dragon spoke to him. The sounds it made were grunts and growls, but just like he felt the truth in his wife's mind, he felt the meaning behind those sounds in the dragon's mind. But it had called Gelb, his son, its dearest friend. "You know Gelb?"

"Of course he does, father," came another voice. He turned again, and there was a grown man, who was unmistakably his son. He was not overly muscular, but not weak-looking. Like his mother, he was also wearing a white robe. Gelbrun could not fully stand, but staggered towards his son. They embraced each other.

"He called you his 'dearest friend'"

"Yes, father," Gelb said. "Each of these Majestic Flamescales, for that is the name they shall soon be called everywhere their true nature becomes known, came into Paradise the day your orders ended their lives. I was given permission by the Son of the Creator of All to welcome them. For their souls are His creation just as ours are."

"The Son of the Creator of All?" asked Gelbrun. "You mean Thor, Son of Odin the All-father?"

Gelb sneered. "Do not speak those names as if they are on the same level with the Creator of All and his Son who are one and the same."

Gelbrun cringed away from his son. There was such authority in that voice, and the truth of it hammered into Gelbrun's mind.

The expression on Gelb's face softened, and he smiled. "Forgive me, father. The Truth has yet to come to the part of the world we were born into. When it does, it will both destroy and create anew. But that is what is to come. You called out to the Creator of All, for He IS the true God, for answers. That is why you are here. There is much you must atone for, and if you trust in Him, He will help you do it. But you must know the truth of how my mother and I came to Paradise that day. Brownscale here bore witness to it. Let him tell you."

Something in the back of his mind told him to deny this. He recognized the Voices trying to speak to him. Then a booming voice that seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere shouted, "BE SILENT!" and at once the whispers ceased, and Gelbrun looked to the dragon, who had bowed its head in reverence at the sound of THE Voice.

"Speak, dragon," Gelbrun said. "I will listen." Here, there could be

no lie spoken. He had no doubt of that.

And the dragon spoke. Instead of just the meaning of the sounds he produced, clear images came into Gelbrun's mind. He was seeing what the dragon was remembering:

"_The dragon-raid was winding down, and most of the dragons were retreating with their food-offering to the Red Death. For that was why the dragons raided human towns, their will bent in servitude to a beast that had given its soul to the Darkness long ago. I was making my way along the beach, carrying a sheep, and I saw a large man with a large warhammer harrassing the souls I know now as Andrina and Gelb. I saw Gelb kick the man, and the man struck him down with one blow of the hammer. He turned his attention to Andrina and tried to force her to mate with him. She resisred, scratching him in the face. He took up his hammer again and ended her life as well. As I passed over, he was dragging them towards a nearby pier._

"_Later I spoke with Firesides, another of my kind, about what I had seen, and he told me that he had found the body of a woman and young boy floating in the water as he was retreating. He said he was overwhelmed with sadness and felt a compulsion stronger than that of the Red Death to do them honor. He pulled them out of the water, and raised his wings to the heavens and offered up a prayer to the Creator of All, that their souls would know peace._

"_He then told me that you had come upon him standing over them, and flew into a rage. You had picked up a large rock and smashed it into his claw as he backed off on all fours. It was the first dragon you maimed."_

The images faded and Gelbrun was on his knees again, weeping bitter tears of self loathing. All this time he had hated a dragon he had thought was responsible for the death of his wife and son, and all this time, the truth was that that dragon was merely praying for them. And the Voices had come to his mind then, speaking their poison, blinding him from all that truly mattered. All because he willingly gave into hatred.

How much innocent blood, human and dragon, was on his hands? He looked at the dragons around him and saw with his eyes the memories of the wounds his orders had inflicted upon them. "I did this," he said to them. "I am so sorry. You may have lived many many years had I not bound you and broken you. Please forgive me."

"We already have," said Brownscale. "The moment we came into Paradise, we knew the truth. Though you tortured us in our last days of life, your soul was in a torment that we could never know. But take heart, Gelbrun, my friend. The Creator of All has broken your chains. Be free of what guilt you may feel for what was done to us. For where we now reside is beyond the touch of pain or sorrow. We are whole in a way we never were before."

"Thank you," he said to the dragon, and it bowed its head in a respectful nod. He turned his head to a sky bluer than any he had ever seen and raised his hands. "Thank you, God, Creator of all, for clarity. Forgive me my transgressions. I pledge what is left of my life to you."

There was no verbal response to his praise, but deep within him,

there was a peace like he had never experience before. It told him more than any words ever could. He was forgiven. He was loved.

Just then, another dragon wandered over. It was beautiful to behold, its scales a light gray color, almost like clouds with a hint of rain in them. It sat down and waited.

Once again, Adrina gently laid a hand on Gelbrun's shoulder "It's time for you to return to life on Earth, or what you still call Midgard. Remember what you learned here."

"I don't want to leave.," Gelbrun said. "I want to stay with you and Gelb."

"I know," she said. "But while this is now your destination, you have not finished your journey yet, my love. You'll be home soon. And we will be waiting.

He looked back and forth between his wife and son. "I love you both."

"I love you to," said both Andrina and Gelb at the same time.

The light-gray dragon stepped forward. "My name is Graycloud. If you meet a black dragon who is now called Toothless, tell him I send my love."

He knew who Toothless was. The dragon Stoick's son rode. It amazed him at the thought of how in this place, so many souls were connected and intertwined. If only things in Midgard worked the same way. Maybe they could, if everyone came to know the Truth.

O O O

Just as quickly it had begun, the wave of dizziness and weakness passed and darkness faded into the familiar surroundings of his chambers. But he remembered everything. He had seen his wife and son in a place they called Paradise, and there were dragons there, and one of them showed him what really happened to his family that day... The large viking with the hammer his wife had scratched on the face before he killed her...

Oh, God! A large viking with a hammer with claw-marks on his face...

"Nareg," he spat the name in a whispered tone. He made his way over to his bed and pressed his index fingers into the ornate pattern on the headboard. There was a click and a panel opened, revealing a sword and dagger. He took the sword with his right hand and the dagger with his left. They were a gift to him from Andrina on his thirtieth birthday. Today they would be tools of justice.

He strode to the door, tucked the sword under his arm and banged on it. "Guards! I want to speak to Nareg!"

"He doesn't want to speak to you," came the reply.

Gelbrun sighed. "I've decided that he's right. I have information that he would find crucial, and if he discovered that you prevented me from delivering it, then your skull and Helga might get to know

each other very well, if you take my meaning."

After a moment, he heard the sound of keys rattling against the door, then the click of the lock. As the two guards entered the room, he sprang into an almost-dance swinging sword and dagger as he moved between the two, who fell to the floor dead before they even realized they were being attacked. He had not moved this lithely since he was thirty-five, his body having succumbed to mindless rage in the years since. But today, he felt young and vital again.

He strode purposefully through the fortress, it had been built over the course of a couple of years at his directive. He recalled being disgusted at the thought of Daggur the Deranged calling himself a lord, but what had he been doing if not lording it over his people instead of protecting and leading them. He shrugged the dark thoughts away. That was the past. Here and now called for focus. He met nobody on the way to the great hall, where he knew that Nareg would be waiting for Stoick and Tarina's arrival.

The tiny little part he was supposed to play before the end of the last scene of this little drama was to be handed over to Tarina and Stoick as a mock tribute to lull them into a false sense of security while negotiating for terms of the outcasts safe withdrawal from what ultimately proved to be a situation they really had no business getting themselves into. Daggur's fleet would be sweeping in at that point, and Berk's dragons having essentially exhausting their fire on the attack on the outcast fleet, would not be able to do much against those numbers. One thing he was absolutely clear on was that the salvation of Nartara relied on Berk.

But first, for Nareg, this would be the day of reckoning.

* * *

><p>Okay, everyone... I know this probably was the most unexpected turn of events in this story, but I happen to be very fond of dynamic characters, especially those who start of as vile having their eyes opened and making a change. Most notable of these are characters like Scrooge and Darth Vader.

I also happen to be a big Wheel of Time fan, and one of the thoughts that was penned in even the first book of that series was that no man can walk so long in the Shadow that he cannot come again into the Light. Since I created the character of Gelbrun, I had been struggling with whether or not he could be redeemed somehow. In the earlier chapter, "Dragon Council," I revealed that Brokenclaw was confronted by Gelbrun as he stood over the bodies of the man's wife and son, offering a prayer for their souls. That became the key... If Gelbrun could somehow come to know the truth, what would it do to him.

And let's face it... the man had backed himself into a corner with the alliance with the outcasts (which I needed to go into a little bit of detail on in this chapter), his people are against him, his army has deserted him. And the voices he had been listening to had gone silent. Many people who come to the end of themselves and know it call out to some higher power for hope. So I figured why not go with that here?

**I also felt that the whole battle to get to Nartara was too easy,

and I had been toying with bringing Daggur into the story somehow. So the notion of plots behind plots presented itself, and I ran with it. The fighting is not over.**

I hope you all enjoyed this chapter. Let me know what you think.

Be blessed...

13. Chapter 13 - Through the Darkness

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Thirteen
â€" Through the Darkness**

Stoick could not understand what he was seeing. As he and the combined force of his warriors and those supporting Tarina marched towards the center of town, there was no opposition. Oh there were outcast soldiers there, but they stood at attention, looking straight ahead, not making any threatening moves. Something was going on here that didn't add up.

As Tarina led the group toward the gates of the fortress, one of the outcast guards stepped forward with a hand raised in salute to Tarina. "We recognize you, Tarina, daughter of Gelbrun. I have orders to escort you and your honor guard to Nareg, who holds the fortress in your name, may your leadership be strong and just!"

Stoick wasn't buying it. "What in the name of Loki is this?" he demanded.

"We recognize you, Stoick the Vast, Chief of Berk. Nareg will explain everything, if you will follow me, please." The guard gestured towards the fortress's main front door, and two other guards opened them.

Their escort led them into the fortress and down several twisting and turning corridors until they came to the great hall. But what they found when they got there was surprising to all of them, including the outcast escort.

Gelbrun was there, gleaming sword in one hand and matching dagger in the other, and he was staring intently at the large Outcast warrior with a massive war hammer. That had to have been Nareg, who was clearly looking uneasy, as if things were not going according to plan.

"Ah, Good," Gelbrun said in a voice which had no hint of the madness in it that Stoick remembered. "Witnesses to justice."

Nareg smiled in a condescending way. "Be a good little lunatic now and put those down before you cut yourself."

"It is not myself I will be cutting, you murderer!" Gelbrun said back in a tone that was very even and calm considering the circumstances. "Only your throat. And after I do that, I will take your hammer and

shatter your bones, as you shattered the bones of my _wife_ and my _SON!"_

"What?" cried Tarina.

"He's a mad fool, Lady Tarina," said Nareg. "I had him taken prisoner as soon as I realized that he had manipulated Alvin into helping him fight his battle for him. We were given promises that I have learned he had no intention or ability to keep. Alvin was a fool to allow himself to be led by the nose. He's stuck out at sea, and I am here cleaning up this mess. I want to discuss the terms of the peaceful withdrawal of my people from your island, in exchange for your father. I recognize your authority as leader of your people."

As Nareg made as if to bow, Gelbrun advanced towards him.

"Indeed," Gelbrun said. "I intend to abdicate all authority over Nartara and her people to my daughter. I have much to atone for, and I will gladly do so. But first, I will avenge the death of my beloved wife and son, whom you killed."

"Clearly he doesn't know what he's talking about," Nareg whined. "Up to this very day he has been ranting about he would torment every Monstrous Nightmare he could find for what one of their kind did to his 'beloved wife and son.'"

"Flamescale," said Gelbrun, matter-of-factly. "Majestic Flamescale. Not Monstrous Nightmare."

Tarina and Stoick looked at each other. "How does he know about the new dragon names?" Stoick asked. "I don't know. None of the people who I told the name to has been captured, and there has been no communication to the fortress since I arrived."

"Shall I tell you what happened, my precious girl?" Gelbrun asked as he circled Nareg, never taking his eyes off the large outcast. "It happened on that day we had both a dragon raid and an attack by renegades. This man was one of them. He thought to force himself upon your mother. Gelb kicked him in the knee, and was dealt a fatal blow with that very war hammer he holds in his hands now. Your mother resisted, and put those claw-marks on his face with her own hand. He killed her, too."

Nareg was sweating. "How in the name of Odin do you know that?"

Gelbrun grinned at him, for the first time during this encounter, he looked a bit insane.

"A dragon in Paradise told me," he said quietly. "And by asking how I knew it, you name yourself guilty. And for the first time in these many years, and as my last act as Chief of Nartara, I will see justice done upon you."

Gelbrun lunged forward and Nareg brought up his war hammer, swinging it with enough force to easily crush a man in one blow. At the last second, Gelbrun bent himself backwards and the hammer swung over him and carried Nareg to the side. Gelbrun landed on his back, but sprang back to his feet in an instant.

Nareg spun with the momentum of his hammer and brought it low in an attempt to shatter the Nartaran Chief's legs. Gelbrun gracefully leaped over it, spinning in the air as he did, the tip of his sword slashing the Outcast's shoulder. Nareg roared in rage and came around thrusting the hammer towards Gelbrun's chest.

Gelbrun threw himself backwards, going down on his back again. Once again, the momentum of Nareg's move carried the man with it. Gelbrun kicked out with both feet, planting them both in Nareg's stomach with enough force that the wind left his lungs. Gelbrun rolled to his side and came up in a low stance, swinging his razor-sharp sword upward and to the outside. The war hammer that had been used to kill his wife and son clanged to the floor at Gelbrun's feet

Nareg howled in pain again, clutching a ruined stump half-way up his forearm, blood spurting from it with every beat of his heart, which was pounding in fear. Nareg dropped to his knees. "Mercy! I beg you!" he glanced at the Outcast guard who escorted Tarina and the others into the chamber, and managed to keep a satisfied smirk off his face when the man nodded and stepped forward to come behind Gelbrun with his blade drawn. He was not able to keep the look of horror from his face when, at the last second, with the would-be backstabber with his weapon raised, Gelbrun thrust his sword backwards, impaling the man in the stomach. He let go of the sword as he turned and thrust the dagger into the man's throat. He would not be sneaking up behind anyone else ever again.

Nareg was weak from loss of blood. He could not stand. All he could do was watch as Gelbrun picked up his war hammer, hefting it to test its weight and balance. He licked his lips. "I am sure we can come to an arrangement. I've got powerful friends. Rich friends. Let me go and I will make it worth your while."

Gelbrun stared at him coldly.

"No..." Nareg said.

Gelbrun stepped forward, tightening his grip on the haft of the war hammer.

"No!" Nareg shouted.

Gelbrun brought the hammer up to the side.

NOOOOOO!" Screamed Nareg.

Gelbrun swung the hammer, catching Nareg squarely in the jaw, ripping the lower half of the murderer's face off.

Nareg's next scream was an undefined vowel sound followed by a horrible squeal as he sucked in what was his last breath.

Gelbrun raised the hammer again and brought it down directly on the top of Nareg's skull, which burst like an over-ripe melon, splattering gore all over the place. He then fell to his knees, threw back his head and wailed. He pitched forward, sobbing. "For you, Andrina," he said, followed by more sobs. "For you, Gelb."

Tarina approached her father as he knelt, weeping, on the floor. She placed a hand on his shoulder, and he twitched, turning to face her.

"Father?"

He stood and gathered his daughter into his arms. "Oh, Tarina, my precious girl. Please forgive me. I gave myself over to hatred and became the very thing I was seeking to destroy... A monstrous nightmare. I am so sorry."

Tarina buried her face in her father's beard. "I love you, father. I forgive you."

Gelbrun knelt before his daughter. "Tarina, daughter of my blood, I hereby abdicate all authority over Nartara and her people to you. May you lead in justice and grace. Let all present recognize Tarina, Chief of Nartara!"

Stoick actually found himself wiping a tear from his eye. He came here for vengeance, only to find that the object of his goal had somehow been redeemed. Gelbrun the mad was gone, replaced with a man who had once known honor and had come to know it again.

"Chief Stoick," Tarina called. "Do you recognize my authority as Chief of Nartara and her people?"

"I Recognize you, Tarina, Chief of Nartara."

"Do you see justice done this day in the abdication of my father Gelbrun, former Chief of Nartara?"

"I do," Stoick responded. "Justice is satisfied. Gelbrun, the Mad Chief of Nartara is no more. My honor is satisfied."

"I must speak," Gelbrun said with an urgent tone.

Tarina looked at her father. "I am listening."

"We are in danger here. Dagur the Deranged will be here with his fleet soon. We need to get out of here before he arrives."

"Dagur?" demanded Stoick. "He's involved in your scheme as well?"

"Not mine, Stoick," Gelbrun said. "Alvin's. He saw an opportunity to move up in the world. In my madness I signed Nartara over to the protection of the Outcasts until you were dealt with. Alvin had brokered an arrangement with Dagur which would hand us all over to him, and in exchange for all of you, Dagur would give Nartara to the Outcasts on the condition that they would join their ships to his fleet should he call for them. Dagur calls himself a lord now. He's bent on conquest. "

Stoick nodded. This was exactly the sort of trap-play he would expect from Alvin. The man was lethally cunning. And the Outcasts taking over Nartara, and allying themselves with the Berserkers would make them a real force to be reckoned with.

Tarina thought for a moment. "Nareg would have taken us prisoner, right?"

"Not immediately," Gelbrun said. His plan was to keep you tied up in negotiations, with Stoick here serving as a legal witness. All the

while Dagur's forces would converge and take your people from behind."

"Clever," said Stoick. "Well we cannot tip our hand yet. Let them think they've succeeded."

"What?" said Gelbrun and Tarina at the same time.

"Think about it... Let's make our way to the dungeon and out the secret loading tunnel. I assume that you didn't tell Alvin about it or where it leads?" he asked, looking Gelbrun squarely in the eye.

"No. And I doubt that the exit would be guarded. Alvin only stationed his warriors in the courtyard and at the fortress entrance. If we are careful, we can slip out of the fortress and make our way into the woods."

"Then let's be about it," Tarina said, and the three of them began making their way through the fortress towards the dungeon. "I know the way back to the main resistance camp deep in those woods. We left enough people behind so that if things went badly, they could still do a lot of damage."

Gelbrun nodded. "When we get there, I have a plan. One that might just turn the tide for us if everything works."

they reached the dungeon and entered. There were no guards here. Nobody was imprisoned at the time, after all. Tarina found the key to the cargo tunnel and proceeded to unlock the secret door. Gelbrun stood staring at the floor where brownish-red smears could be seen... Smears of dried dragon blood. Stoick heard the former Nartaran chief mumbling what sounded like a prayer, and he realized he was praying for the dragons who were tormented here by his command. He really had changed.

"Got it," Tarina said, as she slid the false wall open revealing a dark tunnel. With determination, they all stepped through the entryway and made their way through the darkness...

* * *

><p>Hello, Everyone... I hope you found the resolution of this branch of the plot satisfying. There's still more to come.

Please let me know what you think.

Be blessed...

14. Chapter 14 - Only a Memory

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon..."

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Fourteen
â€" Only a Memory**

Not long after they had all left the Nartara docks, Hiccup suggested that the dragon riders remove themselves from the entourage and retire to the highlands where the other half of the Nartaran resistance force had made camp. He had expressed his concern that there was really no way to know how many Outcasts were on land, or what their game might be. And if they had some trick up their sleeves, it would be better if they could be observed from a high vantage point and countered from the air.

Stoick and Tarina had both agreed with his logic, so when they had entered the town proper, there were no dragons present.

Toram wasn't particularly happy about it, and was presently pacing back and forth, his Flamescale turning his head back and forth while watching him. He respected Stoick the Vast, and he trusted that the visitors from Berk wouldn't do anything to harm her or her people. But there was something wrong. He couldn't put his finger on exactly what was making him uneasy, but the feeling was there, and he couldn't shake it. Just who was that skinny kid to speak for him, even though he was, by virtue of the Bond, a dragon rider? He looked as if he couldn't even lift a sword, let alone prove himself in a battle. And yet, there he was, having been the architect of the battle at sea that left a fleet of enemy vessels on the bottom of the ocean, burning, or otherwise unable to function, with Alvin the Treacherous out there on one of them. Realizing that, and knowing that Tarina had spent time on Berk getting to know its people, including the Chief's son, it started to make sense that they knew the lad well enough to know what was best where dragon strategy was concerned.

And he rode a Night Fury. Toram had never seen one close up before today. He remembered seeing the vague outline of one during a dragon raid over a year ago. It was right after it had strafed a grazing field with its blue fireballs, scattering a Yak herd so they would be easier for the other dragons to swoop in and grab them at the same time. Yaks clustered together would have required multiple passes to grab, but scattered, one pass from several dragons in loose formation could grab most of them at once. It was a sign of a calculating mind. Some said that dragons were mindless brutes, but Toram would never call that Night Fury mindless. He wondered if Hiccup's Night Fury was the same one. It wouldn't surprise him.

He threw up his hands and sighed. Whatever was wrong, there was nothing he could do about it by pacing. And then there was Jarin of Berk. What gave him the right to pursue romantic relations with Tarina. From what he gathered, the man was nothing more than a farmhand before he became a dragon rider. And yet he was the man who cared for his dragon while it was a guest of Berk after carrying Stoick to his freedom. And he had also cared for the dragon he now rode and was bonded to, nursing it back from the brink of death. This made him more than any mere farmhand.

It's all these dragons, he thought. _They have changed the way we think and live. They have wiped away lines that divide and have brought unity, regardless of societal status as it has been. A hiccup becomes a hero to his people. A farmhand becomes fianc   to our future chief. All because of dragons._

He suddenly found himself overcome with regret. He had missed his

dragon since moments after their bonding, and yet here he was, just a few paces away from him, and all he could do was pace and inwardly grumble about things that were beyond his control. He looked over to the dragon who clearly had been keeping his eyes on him. Toram signed and walked over.

"Hello, there big guy," he said, and the dragon responded with a low purr-like rumble. "Sorry I haven't been spending time with you. I just have a lot on my mind."

The dragon tilted his head to the side, as if considering Toram's words. Then he nudged Toram in the chest, gently for a creature of his size.

"Right," Toram said. "I'm here now. You're here with me. And you're amazing." For the first time, he took a really good look at his Majestic Flamescale, noting the bright yellow of its eyes. Most others of his kind had darker reds and browns in their eye color. "Hmmm..." he said, giving it some thought. "You have the brightest eyes I have ever seen in your species. They tell me that you have remained nameless, because they wanted me to be able to give you a name after we were reunited. So what do you think of Brighteye?"

The majestic flamescale tilted his head to the side again, clearly thinking it over.

"You like that name?" Toram asked holding out his hand, palm outward. "Brighteye?"

The dragon rumble-purred again and nuzzled Toram's palm.

"And so, you shall be known as Brighteye, and I will be known as your companion and rider."

Brighteye continued to purr.

"It's a good name," came a nasally voice from behind.

Toram turned, hand instinctively going to his sword-hilt and stopping when he recognized Hiccup striding forward with his Night Fury close beside him, the dragon clearly watching his hand as he lowered it to his side.

Hiccup held up both of his hands and grinned. "Didn't mean to startle you."

Toram nodded. "No problem. How can I help you, son of Stoick," he responded formally.

"Please," the smaller man said. "Call me Hiccup. Everyone else does."

"Very well... uhm... Hiccup," Toram responded. "Is there something I can do for you?"

"Not really," answered Hiccup. "I just wanted to apologize."

"For what?" Asked Toram.

"For speaking for you as leader of the Dragon Riders." Hiccup

answered. "I know that you had to have felt like your authority was being undermined by an outsider. And it is true. I am not wanting to take on any sort of authority in terms of Nartaran affairs or over any of its people. I just have an understanding of how to do things with dragons, and so I spoke only as the senior-most dragon rider here. I don't want there to be any animosity between us, Toram." He extended his hand to the Nartaran soldier.

"Nor I," Toram said, accepting Hiccup's hand in a firm grip. "Apology accepted, Hiccup, Son of Stoick."

Hiccup nodded and Toram released his hand, which he flexed a couple of times to get rid of the tingling sensation the soldier's grip had caused. "He's a fine dragon, Toram. And as I said a moment ago, 'Brichteye' is a good name, and it suits him well."

Toram was about to speak up when Fishlegs flew in on Meatlug. "Hiccup, Toram," he said. "Your father and Tarina are coming up the back trail. And I think they have Gelbrun with them!"

"What?" Toram spat. "Why is she bringing him here? Are you sure that she and Stoick are not being coerced?"

Fishlegs shook his head. "They seem fine to me. Gelbrun has a sword and dagger, and Tarina and the Chief have their weapons. But it is just them. I have no idea why the warriors and resistance fighters aren't with them."

Toram considered this information carefully. "I don't like this. Hiccup, would you ride Toothless out to greet them? I don't want Gelbrun close to the camp until I am sure what's going on. I need to fly down to the town and see what is going on with the rest of our people."

Hiccup nodded. "I agree. This seems odd. Be careful. We don't know what might have happened, for sure."

Toram nodded, mounted Brichteye and took to the air.

"Okay, bud," he said to Toothless. "Let's get going."

O O O

A few moments later, Hiccup arrived in front of Stoick, Tarina and Gelbrun on the back trail, startling the trio.

"Hiccup," said Stoick. "What do you mean by surprising us like that."

"Captain Toram asked me to intercept you, on the count of who you have with you," Hiccup replied staring daggers at Gelbrun, and toothless bared his teeth.

Gelbrun stepped forward, hands raised to show that he was not hostile. "I greet you, Hiccup, First Rider of Berk and Son of Stoick," he said in a warm tone that was completely contradictory to the reputation that surrounded him.

"Dad?" Hiccup asked, looking to Stoick for an explanation.

"Gelbrun has abdicated his authority to Tarina," Stoick explained. "Totally and without argument. He has also avenged the death of his wife and son, and it seems that in doing so, has freed himself from the madness that had hold of him so long."

"As I said, Stoick," Gelbrun said, rolling his eyes. "God freed me from the madness and allowed me to see the truth. So I regained hold of my senses before I avenged my wife and son."

Stoick shook his head. "I am not sure about this one god, creator of all, stuff you've been spouting. It goes against everything I was raised to believe. But still, you are far more amicable now than when I first met you, and you threw me in the dungeon, so if works for you then great, I guess..."

Gelbrun made as if to protest, but then smiled and just nodded. "Bottom line is that I am no longer the monster I had become. I have much to atone for, and I am prepared to pay whatever price the people demand. But that must wait until the real threat is dealt with."

Hiccup narrowed his eyes. "I thought you were the real threat."

Gelbrun shrugged. "I stopped being the real threat the moment I signed that damnable treaty with Alvin. After signing the treaty with me, he turned around and made a deal with Dagur the Deranged."

"Dagur!?" Hiccup exclaimed. "He's coming to Nartara."

"Yes," said Gelbrun. "We need to send a dragon rider north by north west to a small island settlement called Neverthaw. We used to have a grand navy before I was sending ships out to look for the dragons' nest. The man in charge of it got tired of me throwing ships and lives away, even though the dragons had stopped raiding us. And rightly so. All of the captains were behind him, and he took them to Neverthaw. He had me over a barrel. Who was I going to send against him? How would they pursue him? He promised to return if I came to my senses and that he would accept the consequences for his betrayal, so long as the men under his command would not be punished. Well I have no authority over anyone anymore. And if my Daughter's time as chief is to endure, she will need a navy again."

Tarina had been standing there with her mouth hanging open. "Father, you said that the navy had been destroyed by dragons"

"What can I say, my daughter?" Gelbrun asked with a sheepish expression. "I was Gelbrun the Mad. I twisted truth around to make it always seem to come out in my favor. My hatred of dragons was destroying the navy, and Admiral Jorgan chose to save those under his command. Now I will write a letter to him, and send it by dragon rider, calling him to return and be prepared to pledge loyalty to you."

Tarina nodded. "Hiccup, If you would, go find Barr and have him make sure that Brokenclaw is ready to fly, and that I will see him in the command tent."

Hiccup looked to Stoick, who nodded. "You got it," he

said.

"Toothless," Gelbrun called to the Night Fury, who stared back at him with suspicion. "Graycloud wanted me to tell you that she sends her love." The dragon's eyes widened, and his expression softened.

Hiccup shook his head with confusion, but he had a task that needed to be completed. There would be time for questions later. "Let's go, bud," he said, and they took to the air to go find Barr.

Tarina, Stoick and Gelbrun continued to the edge of the camp.

"Chief Stoick," Tarina said. "Would you be so kind as to show my father to the camp and see to it that he is treated well?"

Stoick was not used to being told what to do, but this was part of the agreement he made with Tarina should things turn out as they did. Nartara was a sovereign community, and Tarina was its chief, and he was here to support her. And she was keeping her word that should she command him, it would be in the form of a request and would not be unreasonable. "Of course," he said.

Tarina took her leave, heading to the command tent, and Gelbrun followed Stoick to the mess tent.

As they were walking, A Majestic Flamescale eating a pile of fish caught Gelbrun's attention. Something was different about this dragon. It's scales didn't quite seem to match. "I need to see something, Stoick," he said, and without permission, walked over to take a look, and the dragon looked at him. A low rumbling growl began in its throat and it began to pant with what could only be anxiety. Then it hit him. He knew this flamescale. It wasn't that its scales weren't matching up. It was wearing some sort of body wrap with scales grafted onto it to cover... what? "Oh, God," he said as realization hit him. This was the second to last Flamescale he had imprisoned and witnessed the torture of. Those pitch-black horns that were just noticeably thicker than those of others of its kind. And it had just made eye contact with its former tormentor.

Part of him was telling him he needed to run away. But the other part was saying, take what you deserve like the man you haven't been for years. He stood his ground. The dragon began advancing on him like a hunter stalking prey.

"Yes," he said to the dragon. "It is me. I am the one who took delight in your torment. I am the one who had you beaten. Who had you starved. Who had your scales ripped out. I thought I was avenging my wife and son, by venting my hatred and rage against a dragon species I thought was responsible for their deaths. I was a fool!"

The dragon stopped growling and cocked its head to the side, as if paying real attention to Gelbrun, who continued.

"No dragon killed my wife or son. But one pulled their bodies out of the water and prayed to the Creator of All, to whom I owe my life and restored sanity, that He shelter their souls" Tears were forming in his eyes. He stepped towards the dragon, hands open, showing that he held no weapon. "The words, 'I'm sorry' cannot begin to make up for the pain I caused you, noble creature. I am so glad that you are

alive, and that you recovered. At least I do not have to add your death the many I mourn.

Gelbrun knelt down before Shadowhorn, his head bowed, hands lowered to his sides, completely vulnerable before the beast. "I wronged you so grievously, dragon. I know there is another I began to do the same to here among my daughter's people. But I wronged you first, and you were the first to survive. I offer myself to you, for the right of vengeance is yours." He looked up and met the dragon's intense gaze. "Do as you will with me."

O O O

Shadowhorn was completely taken aback by his former tormentors words. Not just the words. He could feel wave after wave of remorse pouring from the two-legs he had once considered to be evil incarnate. He could sense the aftermath of an experience the human had faced which changed him, and he probed that memory as strongly as he could. This was not something a dragon was supposed to do. It was an invasion of personal privacy. And yet the man kneeling before him had said "Do as you will with me," so in a round about way, permission was granted. He had never invaded another being's mind before, yet it was so easy, a primal ability buried by a moral center that has formed one of the pillars of dragon society as it had become. The Red Death used this ability to bend dragons to its will, and so for centuries dragonkind, at least in this region of the world, was enslaved. Now he used it, not to bend his former tormentor to his will, but to seek the deepest level of understanding. He would look into the man's mind. Look only. He would not plant a command. He would NOT!

What he saw in Gelbrun's mind shook him to the core... _Oh, Creator-of-all!_ He called out. _I SEE it. The evil that drove this creature to do such horror to both my kind and his own kind. I KNOW what it is. For it also touched my mind, filling me with a lie of self-worthlessness. The Great Liar. I understand now. This man, in his grief for the loss of his mate and hatchling, opened himself to the Great Liar. He was possessed by his dark servants, the Voices of Shadow, They spoke their will to his mind and he obeyed without question, for they promised him peace and clarity._

He looked deeper into the man's mind, to a time before the strife began. He saw a little girl two-legs sitting on his knee looking up at him with a smile, and on the other knee was a little boy two-legs who also smiled. He felt a kiss on his cheek and looked over and saw a beautiful young woman. These were his former tormentor's mate and hatchlings. And he felt the memories of joy, that all was right with the world. He loved his family and they loved him. He loved his people and they loved him. This is who Gelbrun the Mad, as the two-legs called him, truly was. A good person whose life was shattered by tragedy and who turned to the wrong source for help.

The memory shifted. There was a dragon raid. The man fought bravely, driving off many dragons, totally unaware of the threat from renegade two-legs who were using the dragon raid as a cover for their nefarious activities. He finally caught sight of them as the last of the dragons escaped with yaks and sheep in their grasp. He rallied the defenders in time to drive the raiders away.

It got strange here... There seemed to be two memories running

parallel to each other. Shadowhorn tapped into both, and nearly vomited from the dizziness that resulted from watching two scenes play out at the same time. In one, Gelbrun was combing the outlying areas of the island looking for signs of any more raiders, working his way towards the docks. In the other, he was seeing from the air a very large two-leg with a hammer harrassing a woman and boy, who were subsequently killed by crushing blows of the hammer. _Oh, Creator-of-all, NO!_ Shadowhorn screamed from inside the memory. He watched as the big man began dragging the woman towards the end of the pier. The last he saw of this split-image was the woman being dropped into the water, unceremoniously, as if she were nothing but a pile of refuse.

The dual memory was still there, only there were spoken words rather than visuals. They spoke of a dragon who was flying over and saw the bodies in the water and was determined to honor them. He had pulled their bodies to shore and stood over them, offering a prayer to the Creator-of-all for their souls.

It was here that the two memories converged into one. Gelbrun running at the dragon in a rage, seeing the ravaged bodies of his mate and hatchling at the dragon's feet. In the memory, the light of dawn reflected off the metallic orange markings on the Dragon's scales. The dragon backed off, but Gelbrun advanced, hoisting a heavy stone which he hurled at the dragon, smashing the third claw at the end of his left arm. _So that is how Brokenclaw's claw got broken. _He pulled his mind out of Gelbrun's memories.

Now knowing the truth of who the two-legs once was, what caused him to turn to darkness, and the knowledge that he had embraced the Creator-of-all, there was no hate in Shadowhorn's heart. Pitty had been replaced by undferstanding.

Gelbrun continued to stare at him. "Go on, dragon. Do whatever you are going to do!" Behind the words was the thought, _I am guilty, punish me quickly, for I deserve nothing less._

Shadowhorn raised his head to the sky and took in a deep breath. Letting it out with a sigh. He brought his face even with Gelbrun's and opened his mouth...

O O O

Gelbrun watched as the dragon raised its head to the sky to take in a deep breath. _Oh, God,_ he thought. _He's going to burn me to death._ Then he breathed a sigh of relief when the dragon merely breathed out a sigh of its own. Then he was gripped with fear again as the dragon lowered its head, so its gace was even with his own and opened its mouth. Gelbrun braced himself for what he was sure would be the snap of those sword-like teeth and the end of his life. Nothing could prepare him for what actually happened...

...the dragon licked him on the cheek. Gelbrun fell forward and curled up into a fetal position, and wept tears of both sadness and joy. Sadness for the wasted years he allowed himself to be enslaved to hatred and madness, joy that he had found forgiveness from his God and now from a being to whom he had caused so much pain and suffering. Because of grace, it was all now only a memory.

15. Chapter 15 - Flight to Neverthaw

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Riders of Berk
****Chapter Fifteen â€"Flight To Neverthaw**

Jarin was looking over some reports given to him by a messenger from the leaders of the Nartaran Resistance. Tarina had named him as her representative while she was away with Stoick as they confronted Gelbrun. It wasn't really his field of expertise, but Tarina insisted that he could handle it. As her husband, he would be expected to assist Tarina in running things. She would be Chief, but she was determined that in spite of him being an outsider, he would be seen as a person of authority second only to her. But he would have to assume responsibilities that went with that authority. He didn't mind. He was worried about messing something up.

He had just finished reading the third of about fifteen of those reports, when Tarina herself strode into the command tent. "Tarina, my love!" he said, standing to his feet so fast that the chair he was sitting in slid backwards and toppled over.

Tarina walked over and embraced her fiancÃ© and kissed him gently on the cheek. There were other people in the command tent, and it would not have been proper to publicly show any stronger sign of affection, until they were married. "Jarin, my heart," she said. "I am pleased to share that my father has abdicated all authority over Nartara to me. He is here in the camp."

"I'll be sure to station guards on him at all times," Jarin said.

"He is not here as a prisoner, Jarin." She said in a tone that brooked no argument. "He is a guest and will be treated accordingly."

"Uhm... Of course, my love," Jarin said.

Tarina sighed. "I know it seems strange, considering all the animosity I have had against him. But Jarin, I promise you that he has regained his sanity and has become the honorable man I remember him as being, before my mother and brother died. It wasn't a dragon that killed them, Jarin. Somehow my father learned who the real murderer was and I witnessed him paying the price at my father's hands."

Jarin listened wide-eyed to Tarina's statement. "But he tortured Shadowhorn! Almost to the point of death. In some foul dungeon he tortured our friend, shedding his blood as a tribute to his rage and hatred. You expect me to just forget that?"

Tarina placed a hand on Jarin's chest. "No, my love," she said. "And he has not forgotten it, either. I saw him just before we left through that dungeon. He was weeping as he stared at the stains of dragon blood on the dungeon floor. If he were still the man I had come to know him as before I left Nartara in the first place, he would not have shown any remorse whatsoever."

Jarin nodded. "Be that as it may," he said. "What about the people he has killed. What of the blood of your people on his hands. Is he absolved of that as well?"

Tarina sighed. "If it were really up to me, I would absolve him of it," she answered. "But it is not up to me. He has committed crimes against the people of Nartara. He must answer for them, and he knows it. Which brings me to a the point. Dagur the Deranged is sailing his Armada to Nartara even now. When he gets here, he will occupy the town and set up his seat in the fortress. Alvin made a deal with him after making one with my father, Of course, that deal involves me and Stoick being in outcast custody. I would expect that the ground soldiers who accompanied us to the town will be captured when Dagur arrives. We must let it happen. My father has a plan that may turn the tide."

Jarin narrowed his eyes. "You don't think it is a trap?"

Tarina shook her head. "No, Jarin. I believe him. I have sent for Lieutenant Barr. I have a mission for him."

"And what might that be, my lady?" Jarina and Tarina turned their heads to see the young officer enter the command tent.

"Ah, Lieutenant Barr." Tarina stated. "Thank you for reporting so quickly."

"An honor to serve, my lady," Barr said, with a small bow.

Tarina nodded in response. "I need you to ride Brokenclaw north by northwest until you come to the port island of Neverthaw. Are you familiar with it?"

Barr nodded. "Yes, my lady. A fishing village is the main settlement there. What am I to look for?"

"Admiral Jorgan and the captains who left with him when my father sent them to find and destroy any dragons they might encounter," Tarina answered.

"I thought they were dead," Barr said.

"It was a lie," Tarina said. "They mutinied against my father and removed themselves from his sphere of influence. My father could not send his navy against them, because they were the navy. But Admiral Jorgan sent word to my father that should he regain his senses and be willing to pardon the captains under his command, he would lead them back to Nartara. Well I intend to pardon the whole lot of them and see our navy restored to its glory, as soon as they turn back the Berserker fleet that is about to converge on Nartara. My father should be arriving soon and will pen a letter for Admiral Jorgan explaining situation. Jorgan is an honorable man, and if Nartara is threatened, he would sail into the worst storm and face the largest enemy armada to defend his home. And I see the look on your face, Lieutenant. My father has regained his senses and has abdicated all of his former authority as Chief of Nartara to me. Do you have a problem with the mission I am setting for you?"

Barr bowed his head again. "No, my lady. I remember as a lad, when

your father led with justice and kindness. If he has once again become the man I remember, then it would be an honor to take on this mission, for the sake of Nartara, for you, and for the honorable man your father was when I was a lad."

Tarina nodded. "How is Brokenclaw?" she asked

"He is well, my lady," Barr replied. "The spear injury was not severe. Balros the tailor stitched it up nicely, and that super-fast healing that dragons have has already pretty much made it a non-issue."

"Good," Tarina said. "Take whatever supplies you need and be ready to depart as soon as my father hands over the letter to be delivered to Admiral Jorgan. Time will be of the essence. We cannot stop Dagur's fleet from arriving, but we can stop them from leaving, and make sure that their stay is anything but advantageous to them."

"Tarina," said Jarin. "I request permission to accompany the Lieutenant on this mission. He is new to dragon riding, and if he should be forced to turn aside, you need someone you can count on to carry on where he may not be able to."

Tarina nodded. "More likely, you want to pay me back for the recklessness of my plan to challenge my father for his position." She smiled as Jarin made as if to protest. "It's alright. I agree with your logic. And two dragon riders coming to Neverthaw, one from Nartara and one from Berk, both attesting to the same facts, will be enough to convince Admiral Jorgan of my father's sincerity."

Jarin nodded. His wife's mind was just as logical as his own. "Come on, Barr," he said. "Let's go find Gelbrun. As soon as he writes that letter, the sooner we can begin our flight to Neverthaw."

* * *

><p>Hello everyone.

Everything is about to start coming to a head and this story is approaching its conclusion. I am really interested in your opinion and I invite you to post a quick review.

For those of you who have read this series as far as it has come, I thank you.

Be blessed...

16. Chapter 16 - Waiting

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Sixteen
â€" Waiting**

Barr and Jarin left the command tent and made their way towards the mess tent, where Gelbrun was supposed to be enjoying a warm meal. But nobody there had seen him or Chief Stoick. Jarin was just about to

order a search for them, when he heard what sounded like a grown man sobbing heavily. He and Barr looked at each other and walked in the direction of the sound.

There was Chief Stoick standing with his back to them, but Jarin's eyes widened when he realized what the Chief was staring at. Shadowhorn had crouched down and was laying his massive chin on a man who was curled up in a fetal position on the ground, and weeping.

Stoick heard a twig snap and turned to see Jarin and Barr slowly approaching. "Ah, Jarin. Lieutenant.," he said, nodding to them both. He quickly wiped his own eyes dispelling tears that were welling up.

"Chief?" asked Jarin. "What's going on? Is that Gelbrun? Did Shadowhorn harm him?"

Stoick shook his head. "Yes, lad. That is Gelbrun, and Shadowhorn harmed him Only if you would consider a dragon licking someone in the face as beinf 'harmful.'"

Jarin's jaw dropped. "Shadowhorn licked Gelbrun? Why?"

Stoick smiled. "Gelbrun confessed his crimes against dragon kind, knelt down and put himself at Shadowhorn's mercy." He sniffed. "That dragon of yours, lad... He's remarkable. One snap of his jaws or a blast of fire, and he could have had revenge. Instead, after seemingly staring INTO him, he licked Gelbrun in the face, Gelbrun collapsed ro the ground just as you see him, and Shadowhorn seems to be comforting him."

Jarin shook his head. "I'm not sure I could be so forgiving, if I were in his place."

Stoick shook his head. "Nor I, lad. The more I learn about dragons, the more I want to ask myself whether or not they, at least in some ways, are more civilized than us humans."

Barr stepped towards Gelbrun as he lay there weeping. "Chief Gelbrun?" he said.

Gelbrun stiffened and stopped weeping. He turned his head to look up at the young soldier. "I am not..." he began, his voice rasping, and he coughed. "I am not a chief any longer, lad."

"I know that you have abdicated your authority. But when I was a lad, I remember you once personally saved my sister from a Berserker raider. Before you lost your wife and son. Lady Tarina has said that you have regained yourself. I want to tell you that I am glad. In my heart, you are the great and honorable chief I remember from my youth."

Gelbrun stood to his feet and laid a hand on Barr's shoulder. "Thank you, lad. It has been a long time since I felt like I was worth anything. But I can see from the expression on your face that there is something you need. Name it and I will do what I can."

Jarin took that moment to step forward. "Gelbrun, I am Jarin of Berk," he said, hesitating a moment before extending his hand,

remembering once again the horrible wounds inflicted on his dragon. But having seen Shadowhorn comforting Gelbrun in his grief, he realized that he could no longer hold onto the animosity. If the victim could forgive, then maybe he could, too.

"Ah, yes," Gelbrun said with a warm smile. "The man to whom my daughter has pledged herself. She told me about you as we made our way here. You gave her loving kindness during a time when I had been convinced she was worthless." there was pain in his eyes. "My eyes have been opened once again, and I know that she is, in factm priceless. And as her father, you have my blessing to marry her."

Jarin was taken aback at Gelbrun's words. The way the man spoke, it was hard to imagine he would ever have been capable of the atrocities he had committed. He found himself actually wanting to like the man who would be his father-in-law. "Thank you, sir. I promise to take care of her."

Gelbrun nodded with a warm smile. "I trust you will."

"Forgive me if I seem hasty, sir," said Barr. "But Jarin and I will be departing for Neverthaw shortly and we-"

"You need the letteer from me to the Admiral," Gelbrun stated. "Of course. I turned aside because I saw this wonderful Majestic Flamescale here and was compelled to speak to him. Let us go to the mess tent. I'll eat and write that letter so you two can be on your way."

O O O

After having delivered Tarina's instructions to Lieutenant Barr, Hiccup flew Toothless towards the town, seeking Captain Toram. The man was not hard to find, thanks to Toothless and his accute senses. He had landed far enough away from the town that it would take any outcasts who may come looking for him a while to get there, but close enough that he could observe what was going on. The warriors from Berk and the resistance fighters were gathered in the central square. They seemed to be in no danger as they stood around conversing. As far as they were concerned, Tarina and Chief Stoick were still negotiating with Gelbrun or whomever was currently in control of the fortress. Politics was never quick, and that was what this part of the campaign involved, so they were content to wait.

That was Toram's report to Hiccup. It was sort of odd, to be in charge of Nartaran defenses but answering to an outsider. But then his report was to Hiccup as a superior Dragon Rider. He still had autonomy as captain of the Nartaran Guard. And Hiccup never seemed to desire any real position of authority beyond necessity. Toram was becoming fond of the First Rider of Berk. If all went well, there would be a lasting peace between Nartara and Berk, and friendship between the two peoples would be welcome and would no doubt lead to prosperity.

"Thanks for the information, captain," Hiccup said. "And now I need to tell you that Dagur the Deranged will be arriving with his fleet soon."

"What!?" Shouted Toram. "Let me guess. Gelbrun brokered a deal with

Alvin, and Alvin turned around and brokered a deal with the Berserkers!"

Hiccup nodded. "Something like that. Gelbrun abdicated his authority to Tarina, but has a plan that could save us. Tarina is sending Barr to Neverthaw to find Admiral Jorgan and the captains he took with him."

Toram's eyes brightened and there was a smile on his face. "Admiral Jorgan took fifty captains with him when he mutinied against Gelbrun. Dagur will likely blockade the island. But if Jorgan and his captains can be rallied, then they will likely end up blockading Dagur's fleet. Assuming our people are merely put under house arrest, we can bide our time in the highlands. As soon as Jorgan's fleet arrives, we can spring our people, arm them, and drive out outcasts and Berserkers alike."

"Unless of course," Hiccup began, "Dagur starts slaughtering our people."

"I don't think we have to worry about that," Toram stated. "Nartara is a bargaining chip. So at least it's people will be safe from immediate reprisal."

"Ordinarily, I would agree," said Hiccup. "However, I have come to know that Dagur is unpredictable at best. One moment he can be amicable and the next totally deranged. Hence his name. We need to be ready to take action in a moment's notice."

Toram nodded. "What do you have in mind?"

Hiccup shook his head. "Nothing. I will defer to you on this matter. I just want you to know that Dagur is dangerously unpredictable, so I advise that you come up with a contingency plan, and back that up with another one."

"Understood," Toram responded. "There's nothing we can do out here. Let's get back to the camp and consult with Tarina and Gelbrun. You say he's trustworthy?"

Hiccup shrugged. "I think he is on the level. If Tarina values his word and is willing to trust his judgment, I believe that we don't have to fear betrayal from him. Of course, I urge caution. There are a lot of things that can go wrong and with little warning. I hate political intrigue. But there it is."

"Indeed," Toram responded. "Let's get going."

Hiccup nodded. "And by the way," he said. "You are doing very well as First Rider of Nartara."

That seemed to take Toram by surprise, and Hiccup smiled. Already, positive change was upon Nartara. All they had to do was hold it together until opportunity presented itself.

O O O

Jarin and Barr flew their Majestic Flamescales side-by-side. Nartara was about an hour behind them. With the message from Gelbrun, a copy of which was in the possession of the both of them, There was every

reason to believe that they could convince Admiral Jorgan to rally the captains to Nartara's aid. They maintained their course, North-by-northwest.

O O O

An hour after Jarin and Barr left on their mission to Neverthaw, the lookouts in the the Nartaran highlands spotted Berserker ships on the horizon. It would not be long before things would be coming to a head. Toram, Tarina, Gelbrun, Hiccup and Stoick met to discuss the possible courses of action. The agreement was that as soon as things seemed to break down in the town, the remnant of the fighting force would begin a protracted siege upon the fortress. Hope would be held out for Admiral Jorgan to come through. Hit-and-fade tactics would be employed against Outcast and Berserker forces in the meantime.

For the moment, there was only one course of action...

Waiting...

17. Chapter 17 - To Slit Gelbrun's Throat

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon..."

* * *

><p>Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Seventeen
â€" To Personally Slit Gelbrun's Throat**

As soon as Jarin and Barr had left for Neverthaw, Gelbrun had turned back to his food, conscious of the crowd of people filing into the mess tent to stare at him. Whispers were heard asking what right he had to eat their food. He and Stoick looked at each other. "I was expecting this to happen a lot sooner, actually," said Gelbrun, and Stoick nodded. "Well, there's nothing for it," he said slowly standing up and raising his hands in a calming manner.

Some of the crowd began to raise their voices, but were quickly silenced by the majority, who wanted to give he who was their chief a chance to speak.

"Good people," he began. "I know that many of you have come to hate me for the vile things I have done over the past several years. And you have a right to. Most of you know the story of how my wife and son died: That it was a Monstrous Nightmare that killed them. I have recently learned that this was not true. It was a renegade Viking who tried to rape my wife who first killed my son who was trying to defend her. He killed her when she resisted and scratched his face. How I came by this information will seem unbelievable to you. Suffice to say that I know it to be completely true. Furthermore, the man who killed my wife and daughter was left in charge of the town when Alvin left to do battle with Berk at sea. He is dead now, slain by my hand and my wife and son have been avenged."

There was some applause from the crowd, but most of the people stared at him waiting to see what else he might say.

"For years, I have not been my own. None of you know this, but in my rage I surrendered to hatred and gave my self over to the whims of evil spirits. Some of you have heard that I listened to voices that only I could hear. You named me 'Gelbrun the Mad' and rightly so. My mind was no longer mine. The voices spoke and I did what I was bidden. They promised peace of mind and contentment, but only after I did one more thing. When I tried to resist, my dreams were nightmares the likes of which I had never seen. Awake or asleep, I saw faces that would strike terror in the heart of the bravest Viking warrior. Only when I did the bidding of the voices was I allowed to sleep and endure my regular nightmares.

"Day and night my mind was tortured until I surrendered completely to the will of the servants of an evil being that would make the cruelest trick of Loki seem petty. I became a puppet until the day I signed that treaty with Alvin the Treacherous, delivering Nartara into his hands. The voices went silent, and I was locked in my chambers by the man who killed my wife and son." His fists were clenched.

"I was used. First by demons and then by Alvin. I knew it to be the truth, and in what I was sure would be a futile act. I called out, asking that if there was any true God, that he would hear me and help me fix what I had spent years ruining."

He then told the crowd about what he experienced when he blacked out, about his newfound faith in the Creator of All, and of his restoration. They reacted mostly as he expected, with incredulity, though there seemed to be a few who seemed to have a hungry expression, as if they wanted to know more about this Creator of All.

"I want you to know that while God has restored my sanity and freed my mind from the chains I willingly allowed to be placed on it, I know that few of you are ready or willing to absolve me of the atrocities I committed against you. I am no longer your Chief. I have abdicated my authority to my daughter, Tarina. She is your Chief, now. And when the coming battle is over, I will surrender myself to the judgment of the people."

There was a concerned look on the people's faces. One of them stood up and demanded to know what battle Gelbrun was referring to. He told them about the double-deal Alvin had pulled with Dagur, whose fleet was sailing in to take possession of the town.

"It's a fine mess you landed us in, Gelbrun!" one of the crowd shouted at him. "You will see it is destroyed!"

"No," Gelbrun answered. "I would see Nartara restored to the greatness it once possessed. Messengers have been sent by order of Chief Tarina to Neverthaw." He explained about how the Nartaran navy mutinied against him to save lives of the crews of the ships, and how they awaited word of him either regaining his senses or him being replaced to return, and that with a representative of both Nartara and Berk bearing the same news, the return of the Nartaran navy would come in time to save them all

The people were not convinced he was completely on the level, but with all he had told them, they were at least willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. After all, he did speak and act in the manner

they remembered before he lost his wife and son. That at least gave them pause.

O O O

"Dragons!"

Jarin and Bar heard the cry from Neverthaw below and in front of them and saw people scattering; some to their homes, and some to the crossbow emplacements in the few guard towers on the outskirts of the fishing town.

"Land here!" Jarin shouted. "We need to keep our dragons out of range of those crossbows. We'll walk to the town and explain ourselves."

Barr nodded. "Understood." He had no trouble taking orders from Jarin. While the man was an outsider by birth, the fact that Tarina had made her intentions to marry him known overrode his foreign birth. And while Tarina would take a direct hand in most of town management, she would delegate a lot of the responsibility to Jarin. She had already begun grooming him towards those responsibilities, and he had taken to them well. It also helped that the man was fair-minded. So yes. Barr had no trouble taking orders from him.

They landed outside of the range of the crossbowmen and ordered their dragons to wait. About halfway from the landing site to the settlement, they were met by a very capable-looking warrior who was flanked by four soldiers.

"Halt!" shouted the warrior. "I am Grumborg, head defender of Neverthaw. Who are you, and for what purpose have you ridden dragons to our island?"

"Hail, Grumborg," Barr said, bowing formally. "I am Lieutenant Barr of Nartara, and this is Jarin of Berk."

Grumborg looked over at Jarin who also bowed formally. "Well that answers who you are, but again, I ask, 'why have you ridden dragons to our island?'"

"We have been sent by the Lady Tarina, Daughter of Gelbrun, who has accepted her father's abdication and the duty of Chief of Nartara. We seek Jorgan, Admiral of the Nartaran Navy, to bid him Lady Tarina's full pardon and ask him to return home along with the captains and crews under his command. For Nartara is under attack by sea and if it is to be saved, we need ships."

Grumborg nodded. "And what of the fact that you rode dragons?"

"We will be happy to explain that," Jarin said. "But right now, it is not relevant. Please take us to Admiral Jorgan."

Grumborg narrowed his eyes. "I am head defender here," he said. "I decide what is relevant, and whether or not to take you to anyone."

Jarin bowed again. "Of course, head defender. I meant no disrespect. So long as Tarina is in danger, I am not as amicable as I usually

am. "

"I thought you were from Berk," Grumborg said. "What are you to Nartara's new chief?"

"They are engaged," Barr said. "When they are married, Jarin here will likely be the one deciding what is relevant and whether or not to lead people to anyone in Nartara. She sent him with me as a representative of both Nartara and of Berk. Suffice to say, Berk is our ally, and their warriors fight well on foot and from the backs of dragons. No doubt you have enjoyed several seasons without a dragon raid?"

Grimborg's eyes widened, and then he nodded. "That is true."

Barr nodded. "And you will not see another dragon raid again, thanks to the son of Berk's chief who ended the war between Berk and dragonkind. You may have heard rumors of one people call the Dragon Conqueror?"

It was Grumborg's turn to nod. "They say he rides a Night Fury, and that he commands a horde of dragons who do his bidding. But I thought it was nothing but a tale told by traders."

Barr shrugged. "Even the wildest of tales have an element of truth to them. Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III does indeed ride a Night Fury. I have met him. He carried the honor of his village. He is the leader of the Berk Dragon Training Academy, and as First Rider of Berk, he leads a team of fellow dragon riders. He does not like the title 'Dragon Conqueror,' because there has only been one dragon he was forced to kill. A great beast called a Red Death. It was controlling the other dragons and sending them out to raid viking villages, to feed it. Most dragons eat fish and have no real interest in sheep or yaks. And without the Red Death forcing its will upon them, they have been content to leave Viking villages unharmed. But to the point, every island in this region owes a debt of gratitude to Hiccup of Berk for what he made possible. And now, he fights along side Nartara to keep the Outcasts and Berserker from gaining a foothold. Now that you know the basics of the story, I humbly ask that you take us to Admiral Jorgan. Time is of the essence.

Grumborg considered what he had heard and made his decision. "Follow me, "

Both Jarin and Barr bowed, and they followed Grumborg into the settlement.

O O O

"Well lookee what we have here," said Dagur, as he hopped off the boarding plank onto Alvin's ship. "Stranded in the middle of the ocean with no help and no hope of stopping Berk's fleet or their dragons."

Alvin stared angrily at Dagur. "This is exactly what we planned, Dagur, and you know it well."

"That's Lord Dagur to you," Dagur said arrogantly. "And I didn't mean to suggest that there was a different plan. You played your part well. And I trust that Gelbrun will be playing his last little part

in this before we dispose of him,"

Alvin nodded. "I left a very capable warrior in charge of the town, and with orders to keep Gelbrun under heel. Berk's fleet made it to the harbor, and I have seen no smoke from the town, suggesting that everything has gone according to plan. Now that you have arrived with your fleet, The next stage of the plan can begin, at your convenience, my lord," Alvin bowed low before Dagur, managing to keep the sneer on his face from being seen.

"Very good, Alvin," Dagur said with a smile. "You have done very well. And I trust that Hiccup and his Night Fury are there?"

"Indeed they are, lord Dagur," Alvin said. "It won't be long before you can mount both their heads on your wall."

"Excellent," Dagur said, cackling maniacally to himself. I will have the survivors of your fleet brought aboard my ships. We'll sink any of your ships that are not fully sea worthy. Then we'll blockade the harbor. Berk's ships will not be able to leave. And with their dragons more or less exhausted from doing battle with you and yours, They won't be able to do enough damage to stop us. Their ships will be given to you to replace some of those you will have lost."

"Thank you, my lord," Alvin said.

Dagur nodded. "Those who serve me well, will be treated well. Those who serve me badly or not at all will suffer and die."

"Of course, my lord," Alvin said, continuing to bow low before Dagur. _I'll serve you so well that you will not doubt my loyalty. And then, Dagur my lord? It will be you who will suffer and die._ He grinned up at Dagur like the good little dog he was pretending to be.

"Right," said Dagur. "Now let's get on my ship, overrun Berk's fleet and then get ourselves to Nartara. I can't wait to personally slit Gelbrun's throat."

* * *

><p>I know I said I was going to post this last night, but I had other things I had to deal with yesterday, and it just wasn't ready to go. There are going to be at least three more chapters. Please review this, as I value your feedback...

Be blessed...

18. Chapter 18 - Dagur's Ultimatum

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter Eighteen
â€" Dagur's Ultimatum**

Stoick pounded his fist on the table in the command tent. The latest word from the scouts who were keeping an eye on the town of Nartara had reported that Dagur, and Alvin had arrived and seized control,

and the unified group of Nartaran resistance and Berk's warriors had been taken to the dungeons. "They have my _people!_"

Tarina turned an icy gaze to Berk's Chief. "Have a care, Stoick," she said. "They have my people, too." She turned her attention back to the scout. "Please continue with your report, Glambing.

"It seemed as if there was a brief argument between Alvin and Dagur. It looked as if Alvin wanted to kill our people on the spot, but Dagur overrode him. Based on what we know of Dagur, he probably will want to sell at least Berk's warriors for Hiccup and his Night Fury."

"We're not on the market," said Hiccup, and everyone at the conference table, including Chief Tarina, laughed, causing the First Rider of Berk to smile.

"Of course not," Tarina said. "This is what we figured would happen. Our people may be imprisoned, but they are far more valuable alive to Dagur, as they are bargaining chips. Alvin did not know about the secret passage out of the dungeon. So it is a safe bet that Dagur doesn't know about it, either. We wait for the cover of night, sneak into the dungeons, and we free the prisoners. By nightfall, our dragons should be rested enough that they can fight effectively again. They will do as much damage as possible to Dagur and Alvin's forces, providing the perfect distraction as we rescue our people. We'll retreat back to these highlands and do our best to hold out while we wait for Admiral Jorgan and his fleet to come. Alvin's fleet is decimated. If Jorgan can blockade Dagur's fleet, then our combined fighting force should be enough to drive Dagur into submission."

"As much as I hate the thought of anyone languishing in those dungeons," began Stoick, "the plan is solid. We have a strong enough force to break our people out. And a night raid by dragons is chaotic enough without the creativity of dragon riders. Dagur can call himself a lord all he wants to. But he has been stupid in the past. He's stupid now, and he will always be stupid. The rules have changed. Brute force is no longer the only answer. My son has shown repeatedly that, in the right circumstances, the mind can be as effective as any sword or axe, if not moreso. I didn't want to admit it, but it's true."

Hiccup's green eyes were wide at his father's statement. "Thanks, Dad," he said.

"You're welcome, son," Stoick replied, with an unmistakable expression of pride. "Dagur is a brute force kind of Viking. And while we wait for Admiral Jorgan to arrive with his fleet, the mind will be our most valuable weapon. We need to think as a people who has dragons as their _friends._ Something Dagur has proven he cannot or will not do. And they _are_ our friends. That gives us a great advantage. If this were a typical Viking raid or takeover, it would be easy to embrace defeat. But nothing will be the same again, now that dragons are our friends. We... Will... Win the day..."

Everyone within earshot applauded the words of Stoick the Vast. Tarina was grinning, ear to ear. So was Hiccup.

"So we wait for dark," Gelbrun said. "we free our people. And then we hold out until the Nartaran navy blocks Dagur's fleet from escape."

And then we will show both Alvin and Dagur what unified dragons and Vikings can do. After that, Dagur the deranged can be called Dagur the Dumbfounded, and Alvin the Treacherous can be called Alvin the Terrified. They will both rue the day they thought to tangle with Nartara or Berk!"

There was initially no applause for Gelbrun, without whom this whole affair would not be playing out. But as Tarina, Stoick and Hiccup began to clap their hands, the others at the table also began to clap.

"And on that note," said Tarina, "This meeting is adjourned. Everyone who will be participating in tonight's rescue efforts or the distraction that will make it successful, get as much rest for yourselves and your dragons as you can."

O O O

Dagur surveyed the carnage in the Nartaran great hall. "This is your idea of keeping Gelbrun under heel?"

Dagur had a hard time keeping his mouth from hanging open at the sight of one of his most reliable warriors lying dead on the floor, his jaw and head crushed from massive impact. "I promise you, lord Dagur, that I never once imagined that Nareg would fail me like this. He never once failed me before."

Dagur rolled his eyes. He too had people he had considered to be totally reliable prove themselves to be anything but. It didn't matter. He had Berk's warriors. He had Nartara's resistance fighters.

"It matters not," he said. "Here is my decree. If Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third does not surrender himself and his Night Fury to me by midnight tonight, I will kill every warrior from Berk and every member of the Nartaran resistance. Alvin, pick one of your useless minions and send them up into the highlands to deliver my ultimatum."

Alvin fought the urge to sneer at Dagur's words. So far he had done everything he was instructed to do, and yet Dagur still contented himself with treating him and his people like trash. He made a mental note to get himself and as many outcasts as possible away from this despicable island as he could, the first opportunity he had... But for now he had to select someone to deliver Dagur's ultimatum

19. Chapter 19 - Completely Empty

I neither own nor claim any rights to "How To Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara

Chapter Nineteen â€" Completely Empty

Swindel the Outcast looked back and forth at Gelbrun and Stoick the Vast as they considered the implications of Dagur's Ultimatum. After they finished conversing for a few moments they handed the letter

over to Tarina who frowned at its contents.

"Do we kill him?" asked Toram, poking at Swindel with a stick.

Tarina shook her head, "No, Captain," she said. "I shall have need of him to deliver our response." She sat back down at the head of the table in the command tent and began writing a letter of her own.

Within ten minutes, Swindel was on his way back to Alvin.

O O O

"Report!" Alvin shouted, and Dagur turned to regard the messenger who was more than a simple courier.

Swindel cleared his throat. "Before I let them see me, sir, I managed to discover the locations of where the women and children are camping, as Lord Dagur requested. They have minimal guards, which means either the bulk of the fighting force is encamped in the highlands and the women and children are not given much consideration, or, and I believe this to be more likely, the women and children may have considerable skills in self defense."

Dagur was grinning. "You've done well, for an Outcast. You're one of my men, now. Go see my quartermaster about getting into some proper armor."

"WHAT!?"

Dagur turned towards the direction of the shout, and narrowed his eyes at Alvin. "You have a problem with that?"

"I do indeed. My men are my men, and nobody has the right to decide where they go other than me." Alvin had drawn himself up to full height and had squared his shoulders, making him look far more intimidating than usual.

Dagur wasn't impressed, and he shook his head with a sarcastic half-smile. "You really are pathetic, Alvin. You remember the terms of the agreement that brought me here, right? You agreed that the Outcasts, would serve my needs in exchange for this rich land if I were to help you win it. I honor my agreements, Alvin. And I expect those who enter into them with me to do the same. So you see, what is left of your ships are really mine. This land is mine. Your men are mine..." He leaned into Alvin's face. "And you are mine!"

Alvin reached for his sword, but stopped short of drawing it a he heard the squeak of many bows being drawn back. He was surrounded by several of Dagur's archers who were all pointing arrows at him.

"You know?" Dagur began, "I used to think that bows and arrows were the tools of cowards. But I have come to find out that they are actually very good deterrents for fools. Now are you going to take your hand off your sword hilt, or shall we change your name to Alvin the Pincushion?"

Alvin lowered his hand to his side, stared daggers at Dagur, and replied through clinched teeth. "I am at your service, my lord." He

poured as much disdain as he could into that last word.

"Oh, try not to be so dramatic, Alvin," Dagur said. "Once we conquer Nartara, it will be handed over to you, as we agreed. And as per the agreement, you and your people will only be called if we have need. Most of what I'll use Nartara for will be its port. And when you and your people get the farms and livestock in order, you will send your surplus, minus what you need to stockpile for your survival, as a tribute. And if anyone moves against you, they will have to deal with _me!_ I look after my interests, Alvin. And Nartara will be one of those interests. Be advised, though... If YOU stir up trouble and it turns out to be more than you can handle, like usual, I'll still look after my interests... But YOU will have to solve your own problems... I think that is more than fair, don't you?"

Alvin didn't say anything.

"_DON'T _you?" Dagur asked again.

Alvin sighed. "Yes, lord Dagur," he said. "More than fair."

Dagur grinned... "Good. Now let's sit down and figure out how best to use the information my new master spy has brought us."

O O O

As Night began to fall Gelbrun, Toram and Stoick led a group of resistance fighters through the woods towards the town. An hour after dark, Hiccup and his senior dragon riders would make a brief but heavily damaging strike on the opposite side of the town, hopefully making enough of a distraction to keep Dagur and Alvin's forces from turning their eyes towards what would be moving in secret behind their very backs...

Hiccup had to be a part of the dragon strike. He had to make sure that Dagur would be drawn away as well, and every time Hiccup and Toothless came within Dagur's sight, it always drew his attention. "I say again, Stoick," Gelbrun began. "The more I get to know that lad of yours, the more I begin to respect him, and you."

Stoick merely nodded. He was beginning to have a hard time thinking of the formerly Mad Chief as anyone other than a trusted comrade-in-arms. But even though the man had regained his sanity and had turned from his cruel ways, he had blood on his hands that could not just be washed off. He was going to have to face the judgment of his people, and there was nothing Stoick could do about that.

He could offer the man amnesty and allow him to live on Berk, but depending on how the Nartaran people felt, that could undermine the treaty he and Tarina had established. No... Even though Gelbrun was the reason he and his warriors had come to Nartara, Stoick had no choice but to conclude that the man's fate was not his to dictate.

The forest began to thin out, and the group could see the walls of the town dimly lit by moonlight in an overcast sky. The gates were well guarded by Dagur's men. There would be no sneaking in the way they sneaked out the last time. "Any bright ideas?" asked Toram.

"No ideas," answered Gelbrun. "Just definite knowledge."

Stoick rolled his eyes. "What in the name of All-mighty Odin is that supposed to mean?"

Gelbrun's expression turned ice-cold, and Stoick took an involuntary step back. "Do not blaspheme the Creator of All by referring to a lesser being as All-mighty. For even Odin was created by He Who Is The Most High."

"Whatever," Stoick said, putting up his hands in a calming manner. "We can discuss the supernatural later. Right now, we need to get into the town."

Gelbrun's expression was still hard and serious, but he nodded and gestured towards the wall. "It's a bit out of our way, but if we make our way around to the other side, there is a secret door made to look like part of the wall, If you didn't know it was there, and didn't know which parts of the surface to pull, twist or press, it would never open. I had it made according to my specific instructions, and then I..."

He faltered, turning his face away as if to avoid looking at something unpleasant. "And then I had the workers who actually made it killed."

Stoick and Toram just stared at him, with mouths hanging open. "You had them killed for making a door precisely as you instructed?"

"I was not myself. I've explained that. It doesn't wash their blood from my hands, and I intend to pay for all my transgressions, when all if this is over. I wanted the means of coming and going from the town as I saw fit, without my movements being noted by the guards. It was paranoia more than anything else. And yet tonight it may mean saving lives.

Stoick nodded. He firmly believed that Gelbrun was repentant. He was not hiding behind his new-found religion and citing "divine forgiveness" as an excuse to avoid paying for his crimes. In fact, the deeper his devotion to this Creator of All became, the more convicted of his evil actions he seemed to become. Stoick didn't want to admit it, but he was beginning to really want to hear more about what Gelbrun had come to believe. And when all this was over, if they all made it through alive, he was determined to ask.

"Right," Stoick said. "If the moon stays behind the clouds, and if we are careful, we can get around to the other side. But we need to get moving. It won't be long before the Dragon Riders create the diversion.

Nartara was bordered by forests from north to southeast, and the party was able to stay under the cover of the trees and at a far enough distance that they could not be seen in the limited light from the moon behind clouds that seemed to be getting thicker. If they could just get to the secret door in time.

O O O

Hiccup stood next to Toothless, the other dragon riders who were already mounted. "Dragonriders!" He called. "we are just minutes away from our distraction-run on the harbor. With luck, our actions will

get the Outcasts and Berserkers' attention. We need to do as much damage to their ships in one strike, with as few fire-shots as possible. We need to conserve our dragons ability to use fire when the next real battle starts. We're all tired. But the good news is that if Jarin and Barr completed their mission successfully, we need only hold out one day. The Nartaran fleet will arrive and cut off Dagur's means of escape. Now let's get in the air and draw the enemy's eyes away from the real mission for tonight: The freedom of our people, from Berk and Nartara alike.

"Snotlout, Ruff and Tuff? You three are first wave. Fishlegs, you're up next. Astrid, you and I bring up the rear and-" Astrid cut him off.

"I just thought of something," she said...

"I'm all ears, Astrid," he said. "What did we miss?"

"Nothing," she said. "I just had a thought that the ships we need to hit hardest are the ourtermost ones. If we cripple them, they won't be easily moved. And if they do manage to row out of the way of the others, it's one less layer for the Nartaran navy to hit. And if they cannot move, then the others won't be able to intercept the navy. They will be trapped between our ships and us, and a layer of their own disabled ships and a larger fleet."

Hiccup pursed his lips as he thought it over. "Brilliant," he said.

Astrid flashed him a beautiful smile, the firelight making her crystal-blue eyes sparkle, just like they did that night they talked about their respective futures on the beach.

"Okay, people," he said. "Astrid's suggestion will make what we are about to do all that much more effective. So rather than passing straight over, we are going to split up from the town, come at them from two different directions, One pass, and we break off. Ruff, Tuff and Snotlout, take the northern approach. Astrid, Fishlegs and I will take the southern path. We'll meet in the middle, break off towards the sea and fly far enough out that between the blaze of their ships burning and the darkness of night, they will not see us double back and return here."

Everyone was noddong.

"I've been dying to blow something up for hours," said Tuffnut.

"You and me both," saif Ruffnut.

The twins banged their helmeted heads together with a loud clang.

"Snotlout Snotlout Oi Oi Oi," yelled Snotlout.

"Chances of success increasing," said Fishlegs.

"You ready?" Hiccup asked Astrid as the others went through their customary morale-boosting activities."

"Yes," she said calmly.

"Alright," he said, climbing onto Toothless' back, his prosthetic foot clicking into place in the tailfin control pedal. "We proceed directly over the town. Split off from there to make your attack run... I have to make my appearances so that Dagur's attention will be drawn. So as soon as I do that, I will follow on my own attack run. Now let's fly!"

The Dragonriders of Berk took to the night sky which was growing ever darker as the cloud cover thickened.

It didn't take long to reach the town, and they came in so fast that Dagur's archers missed every shot they fired. "Alright, bud. Blast a hole in the roof of the mead hall!"

Toothless complied. Berserkers and Outcasts came running out of the mead hall in shocked disarray. He didn't like damaging any of the Nartaran buildings, and Tarina grudgingly agreed to the tactic. But Hiccup volunteered himself and the dragonriders to repairing the damage. Dagur was too smart to accept a "near miss" as anything other than a ruse. A Night Fury never misses. Dagur had to be convinced that the town was under attack, and it worked, because as Hiccup looked back, he saw Dagur falling all over himself, with a clinched fist waving above his head.

Hiccup cut to the right and sped away. With the superior speed of his Night Fury, he caught up with Astrid... "Let's do this!"

They had come around and began to blast the outermost Berserker ships, taking out sails and masts. As they streaked onwards, leaving those ships burning and disabled, but not sinking, they met the other half of the strike team in the middle where they made a 90-degree turn and all headed out to sea. Once they had left the harbor far behind, they doubled back to return to the highland camp.

O O O

Stoick, Toram and Gelbrun saw the flash of plasma fire and heard the explosion that followed and knew that this was the signal. The sky had darkened to pitch black, and they made their way out of the woods and straight towards where Gelbrun said the secret gate was.

Gelbrun approached the wall with determination. "Weapons ready," he said. "We have no way of knowing what is on the other side. Likely nothing, but we cannot afford to leave anything to chance." He began pulling, pressing and twisting spots on the wall in a complex sequence. There was the distinctive CLICK of a lock releasing. He pushed on the wall which swung silently inward. Nobody was on the other side, and so the rescue teams ran into Nartara un-noticed.

They made their way through the streets, hugging close to buildings, moving ever forward to the fortress's back wall. A Door was concealed here as well, It led to a passage that sloped downward. Gelbrun had had it built to deliver monstrous nightmares to the dungeon below, so he could watch them be brutalized. The memory made his intestines twist up. So much pain and suffering at his word and by his hands. How could he pay the price for it?

On the inside of the dungeon, there was a keyhole near the wall panel

hiding the tunnel, but inside the tunnel, there was a release lever. When they had made their way out the last time, they closed the panel and had taken the key with them. And since the only ones who knew about the passage were now all on the same side and out of enemy hands, the outcasts and berserkers could only scratch their heads and wonder about the mystery of how Gelbrun, Tarina and Stoick managed to disappear right from under everyone's nose.

"Alright," Gelbrun began with a near whisper. "Before I pull this lever to open the wall, I want to just remind you that we do not know how well guarded the prisoners are. There could be a handfull of guards, or there could be a whole lot of them. The wall opening will be enough to make any one of them sound the alarm. We do not know how effective Hiccup's distraction was. We must be quick but careful."

Toram and Stoick nodded, the former making a hand signal to the rest of the team.

Gelbrun took a deep breath. "God help us," he said as he pulled the lever, revealing darkness and silence in the dungeon beyond.

The strike team entered a dungeon that was completely empty.

* * *

><p>Okay... I know it has been a long time since my last chapter, but I have been extremely busy with other projects that have not really allowed me a lot of time to devote to writing. Please review.

Be blessed...

20. Chapter 20 - Home Ahead and World Behind

I neither one nor claim any rights to "How to Train Your Dragon"

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara:

Chapter 20 â€" Home Ahead and World Behind

Stoick, Gelbrun and the others clustered together in the empty dungeon.

"Well this is an interesting turn of events," said Stoick.

Gelbrun sighed and shook his head. "I should have seen something like this coming."

Stoick folded his arms and stared at Nartara's former chief. "Something like what?"

"Well... You escaped from the dungeon when I put you there. Captain Toram did as well when he and the soldiers mutinied against me. We escaped through the dungeons when we left the town. Even though I never told Alvin about the secret passage, it stands to reason that either he or Dagur put two and two together and figured that the

dungeon is not secure. That means they are being held somewhere else."

Stoick nodded. "But where?"

Gelbrun thought for a moment. "My guess would be the Mead Hall. It's the only place large enough here to hold everyone. Dagur would want to keep them in one place."

Stoick shook his head. "I don't like it. The mead hall is at the center of town. There's no way we can get close enough without being seen."

Gelbrun shrugged. "If Hiccup and the others did their job right, and I have no reason to think that they didn't, a significant number of Dagur's soldiers would have been drawn to the docks. The ones left guarding the mead hall will be so on edge, expecting another dragon attack, that we might be able to surprise them. And knowing our people, once they realize that we are attempting to free them, they will overpower the guards."

Stoick considered Gelbrun's assessment. "Agreed. We can stick to the shadows as much as possible. Once we break our people out, we'll fall back to the camp as planned."

"It's a little sketchy," Said Toram who had been listening quietly. "But I don't see any other alternative. When Admiral Jorgan's fleet arrives, we'll be needing everyone ready to fight. And we certainly are not going to give in to Dagur's ultimatum."

They had guessed what the ultimatum would be before Dagur had sent his messenger to deliver it. Hiccup and Toothless were to be given over to Dagur in exchange for the release of the prisoners from Berk. What they hadn't anticipated was that failure to comply would mean the execution of the Nartaran prisoners, one by one. That was clearly to serve as an incentive for the Nartaran people not being held prisoner to force Berk's hand. Tarina was wise enough to see it for exactly what it was. Hence, the rescue operation.

Gelbrun looked back and forth between Stoick and Toram. "Indeed. We've lingered here long enough. We had best be moving on before the shock of the dragon attack wears off..."

O O O

Within three hours of their arrival on Neverthaw, Jarin and Barr had met with Admiral Jorgan and had delivered the message from Gelbrun. The Admiral had no trouble recognizing his former Chief's handwriting and the lucidity behind the words in the letter, so he had immediately dispatched runners to call the captains together at the docks. He then had turned to Jarin and Barr and insisted that they show him their dragons. It wasn't that he doubted their word. He just wanted to see it first hand.

Presently, he and the two messengers approached the landing site, and he tensed when he saw the two monstrous nightmares crouching patiently, awaiting their riders' return.

"I trust they didn't give you guys any trouble," Jarin said to one of the guards.

The guard shook his head. "Not at all... In fact, they both fell asleep after you left them, and only woke up a few minutes ago.

A breeze kicked up and Jarin held up his hand, noting that it was blowing from the direction of the village. "The wind blew our scent towards them. They probably figured we were on our way back."

The guard shook his head. "If you say so."

Admiral Jorgan looked back and forth at the two dragons. "Monstrous Nightmares!" he said with awe.

Barr shook his head. "Majestic Flamescales, Admiral. That is their new name."

Jorgan nodded. "Impressive... Come on now... let me see you ride a dragon, and then we can get underway."

"Very well," Jarin said. "Shadowhorn come, please."

Shadowhorn tossed his head, stood up and sauntered over. The guards backed away nervously but Admiral Jorgan stood firm. "You say please to dragons?"

"Yes," said Jarin. "They are not dumb creatures to be tamed and led around on a leash. They are powerful, intelligent and sensitive creatures who deserve our respect."

Jorgan nodded. "I understand. So there's some sort of bond between dragon and rider?"

Jarin nodded as he mounted up on Shadowhorn. "It is usually a bond shared between a dragon and one rider, though this one actually bonded with Chief Tarina as well. It's a mystery, but we have happily accepted it."

Jorgan sneered at Jarin. "I have known Tarina all her life. She has always been a sweet, upstanding girl. I am not comfortable with her being engaged to an outsider. And you said you were just a farmhand?"

Jarin shook his head and sighed. "Admiral, I assure you that my intentions toward Tarina are honorable. Yes, I used to be a farmhand. Now I am a trainer at the Berk Dragon Academy. And you are the first I've told this, but once Tarina and I are married, I am to become head trainer of the Nartara Dragon Academy. Being a farmhand taught me patience and perseverance, which served me in my time as a junior trainer. Hiccup, Astrid, Snotlout, Fishlegs, Ruff and Tuff, each in their own way have taught me wisdom. I don't pretend that there won't be challenges, but I am equipped to lead in the training efforts. Nartara may not have a Night Fury, but many amazing things can be achieved without one."

Jorgan sniffed. "Head trainer of a dragon academy may be an impressive position to hold. But I do not see how you are worthy of the hand of a Chief"

Jarin stared directly into Admiral Jorgan's eyes, his expression hard. "Have a care, Admiral. I am not a confrontational man. I prefer

to approach challenges with a fair mind. But you have judged me without even understanding the nature of the relationship Tarina and I have. She is wonderful. Honorable. Virtuous. I have had no desire to change anything in that regard. When she came to berk, she did not come as a Chief's daughter, but as one seeking a respite from a dark life, one which I am sure you know about all too well, or you would not be speaking so protectively of her."

Admiral Jorgan held Jarin's gaze for a few moments, then turned aside with a sigh. "As you say. She has had a hard life. When Gelbrun went mad, suddenly his precious girl was worth nothing more to him than an object to pour out rage and frustration upon. That's yet another reason I left. I could not bear to see a family I had pledged to serve tear itself apart. I had no mind to continue helping it happen by feeding a madman's hunger for insatiable revenge. He had killed three Monstrous Nightmares and had just begun tormenting a fourth one... one with black horns that were thicker than most.. one that..."

He trailed off as he took a closer look at Shadowhorn. "Thor in a thunderstorm," he said. "It's him." there was no mistaking those horns. Shadowhorn was watching him with interest as he approached and reached out a hand to touch the scale-grafted bodywrap. "He wears this to cover the bare hide his torture left exposed?"

Jarin nodded. "Hiccup, son of Stoick the Vast, came up with the idea. Berk had this idea of using dragon scales to ward structures from dragon fire, but as many structures were damaged from physical forces as were damaged by fire, so it proved to be impractical. They kept the scales in a vault in case they found a practical use for them later. As a result, Shadowhorn is as close to whole as he can be."

"Impressive," said Jorgan. "Still, I would not want to be Gelbrun and come face to face with this majestic creature."

Jarin smiled. "That already happened. I found Gelbrun curled up on the ground crying like a baby, with Shadowhorn here crooning to him." he looked pointedly at Jorgan. "Shadowhorn forgave his tormentor, when he had a perfect opportunity to kill him. He chose to forgive. I am not so sure I could do so as easily."

"I know I couldn't," Jorgan said quietly, with a touch of shame in his voice.

"Anyway," Jarin said, "Are you ready for your ride?"

Jorgan took a step back. "My ride?"

"Yes," said Jarin. "You wanted to see dragon riding. Well there's no better way than to experience it. Climb on behind me."

"I'm not so sure about this," Jorgan said. "I'm a man of the Sea, not of the Air." In spite of his doubts, he climbed on Shadowhorn's back behind Jarin.

"Okay Barr," Jarin said, "Mount up. We're going to fly around the island and then land on the docks."

Barr saluted and climbed up on Brokenclaw's back.

They took to the air, and made a circuit of the Neverthaw. Admiral Jorgan felt like a child experiencing a thrill ride in a half-barrel down a steep hillside, but without the hillside and a powerful and graceful living being in place of the barrel. He realized he was wrong about Jarin. Any man who could so confidently train and ride one of the most dangerous dragons in existence was made of strong stuff, as worthy of a Chief as anyone could be. A Dragon Academy in Nartara would be a wonderful thing. Nartara would soon have its navy again, and it would also have an air force to support it.

After circling the island, Jarin and Barr brought their dragons down toward the docks. Jarin motioned for Barr to land, and a moment later both dragons touched down gracefully

Jorgan dismounted immediately and turned to face Jarin. "That was the most impressive experience I have ever had that does not involve riding out a raging storm at sea," he said, "Thank you."

The sailors and officers were staring wide-eyed at the dragons and doing their best to keep their distance. Admiral Jorgan managed to keep the smile off his face at their shock of seeing him hop off one of the giant lizards, and he drew himself to his full height, carrying himself in that way the comes with more than fifteen years of command. He had sent word ahead of his little dragon ride that he wanted to meet with all of the ship captains on the docks, and they were arriving presently. As soon as they were assembled, he cleared his throat and began to speak.

"Alright, listen up!" he began. "Nartara is under blockade from the Berserker fleet. Gelbrun has abdicated his position to Tarina, who is now the Chief. We swore an oath to return to our home island when the wind changed, and changed it has. A new day is dawning. The dragons you see on these docks are part of the future. They are not the evil creatures we once believed them to be, but were in fact snared by a form of mind control by a creature that the people of Berk call a Red Death. The son of their chief, with the aid of his Night Fury friend, brought the beast down a while back. That is why there have been no more raids on Neverthaw all this time. Berk and Nartara are now allies, and that relationship will soon be solidified by the marriage of our Chief Tarina to this man, Jarin. I was skeptical at first, but I now truly believe that this will be a very good thing, and as a result, Nartara will finally regain its honor and prosperity, and we can once again server her with pride.

"Captains," he said, looking around at those assembled on deck. "Return to your ships and make ready to set sail for home. When we gain sight of the Berserker fleet, Jarin and his companion will do as much damage as they fly back to rally with the Dragon Riders from Berk who will help turn the tide in this battle. Are you with me?"

Shouts of affirmation were raised by all assembled. This was a day that every man present had been waiting for since Admiral Jorgan led the Nartaran fleet in its mutiny against Gelbrun the Mad.

Home was ahead and the world was behind.

I neither own nor claim any rights to How To Train Your Dragon...

* * *

><p>Jarín and the Legacy of Nartara
****Chapter 21: Really Bloody Really Fast**

Nartara's mead hall was near, and Gelbrun, Toram, Stoick and the other members of the rescue party kept to the shadows. They had not run into anyone on the way from the dungeons, the brief dragon raid led by Hiccup having obviously done its job in drawing attention to the docks. Gelbrun was no fool, however. He and Toram had their heads together for a few moments, nodding occasionally at each other's whispered words. "Alright," said Gelbrun. "We've had it easy up til now, Dagur and most of his thugs may have gone to the docks, but he is not so stupid as to leave his prisoners unguarded. There won't likely be enough of them to overcome us, but there will be enough that it will be hard to keep them from raising the alarm."

Stoick nodded. "Perhaps we should handle this with finesse."

Gelbrun grinned. "finesse? You? Word has it that when you were a babe you knocked the head off a dragon. I don't call that finesse."

Stoick chuckled. "Having Hiccup for a son has taught me a great deal since the Dragon Wars ended. Trust me. I am perfectly capable of finesse when the occasion calls for it."

Gelbrun nodded. "Right. Let us see what we are up against. Remember: the enemies we see outside will not indicate how many are on the inside."

They crept forward and looked around the corner of the building they were hiding behind. There were only two Berserker guards at the entrance to the mead hall. Stoick stroked his beard for a moment. "Alright," he whispered. "Here's what we need to do..."

O O O

The Berserker guard on the left sighed. This was boring. He wanted to be part of the action at the docks. Instead he was left with guard duty, partnered with a guard who smelled like warmed-over death. For the fifteenth time tonight, he wondered if the man had ever bathed in his life. His musings were cut short when he heard a sound off to the other guard, right. "did you hear that?" he asked.

"Yes," the stinky guard answered. "I'll go check it out."

"Right," left-hand guard replied. He waited as Stinky went to investigate. And he waited... And waited... Presently, Stinky returned.

"Nothin," he said, and left-hand guard nodded. They stood there for a moment, and then Gelbrun stepped out of the shadows. "What in the name of Odin," left-hand guard said, drawing his sword. Stinky hefted his club and brought it down on left-hand guard's head, dropping him to the floor. He then turned and walked into the mead hall.

Inside, there were ten more berserkers guarding the Nartaran and Berkian prisoners. "Lord Dagur sends word," Stinky said, "Gelbrun the Mad and Stoick the Vast are in Nartara now. They may be trying to free the prisoners. Be on the lookout" With that, he turned and walked out.

? leaned over to the Berkian warrior sitting next to him. "That was captain Toram. I am certain of it. We need to get out of here."

"Shut up!" shouted one of the guards. "No talking at all!"

It had been less than half an hour since the ceiling exploded in the great hall, clearly the work of a Night Fury's plasma fire. Dagur had been in there at the time, gloating over his prisoners, but when the hole was blasted in the roof, he took half of his soldiers with him and commanded the other ten to remain.

Now the prisoners and the remaining guards waited for whatever would happen next. ? was positive that the man in Berserker attire was indeed Captain Toram, and that the message he delivered was meant more for the prisoners than for the Berserker guards. He wanted them to know that a rescue mission was indeed under way. What confused him was that it suggested that Gelbrun and Stoick were on the same side. Something very interesting must have happened since Stoick and Tarina went into the fortress to negotiate.

"pick the closest guard to you and wait for my lead," ? whispered. "Pass it."

"I said no talking at all!" the Berserker guard said again.

Tynimon chuckled.

"Is something funny Nartaran?" the guard demanded.

Tynamon shrugged. "If there's to be no talking at all, then why are you talking?"

the guard gritted his teeth. "I'm not talking, I'm issuing orders."

"With your mouth, yes?" asked Tynamon.

"So?" asked the guard.

"That's called talking, good sir." replied Tynamon.

"Whatever!" the guard shouted. "Open _your_ mouth again, and I'm going to shut it permanently."

"As if you could." Tynamon mumbled loud enough that the guard could hear him.

"That's IT!" the guard shouted, and he charged towards Tynamon.

Tynamon waited until the guard was almost on top of him, then he leapt head-first at the man, planting his head firmly in the guard's

stomach. The banter he had engaged in was to give his message enough time to get passed around by the others, and the rest of the Berserker guards were watching the exchange with amusement. But when Tynamon leaped, many of the other prisoners followed suit, catching the guards completely off-guard.

The sound of the ensuing scuffle was the cue that Toram, Gelbrun and Stoick were waiting for, and they charged into the great hall surrounded by the warriors who accompanied them to the dungeon earlier. Between the prisoners and the rescuers, the Berserker guards were quickly subdued. It all went so well, except for one thing.

Tynamon was kneeling down on the floor, next to the body of the guard he was bantering with. Toram approached him. "Good job, Tynamon," he said. "Now get up and let's get out of here."

Tynamon was shaking his head. Toram moved around so he could see the man's face. That wasn't all he saw. There was a knife embedded in his chest, blade sunk in all the way down to the hilt. The man's heart was clearly pierced. Toram cursed under his breath and caught the former baker as he began to fall to the side. It wouldn't be long.

Tynamon looked up and met Toram's gaze. "Tell my wife and son that I died for them. Tell them I love them. Tell them..." his eyes went blank and he didn't speak again.

Toram gently lay the baker's body down and closed the man's eyes. "When this is over, my friend, I will see to it that a ship will carry you home." That was an honor accorded to a warrior, not a baker. But this man had proven himself as the former in spite of being the latter. Toram would see him honored. He stood up and turned to the others.

"Right!," he said. "Let's not render his sacrifice in vain. We need to get out of here, now." And that is exactly what they did. They made their way quietly back through the darkened streets, back through the secret gate in the outer wall, into the woods, and back to the resistance camp.

Tarina met them as they entered the camp, wanting to make it clear that the safety of her people was of greatest importance to her. "Is that everyone?" she asked Toram.

"All but one, my Chief," he said. "Tynamon the baker, the man most responsible for the resistance effort, gave his life to save us." He expressed his intent to honor the man with a funeral ship, and Tarina agreed.

O O O

Admiral Jorgan stood at the bow of his flagship, surveying the damage to the Berserker fleet as the light of dawn bathed everything a reddish-orange. He couldn't help but smile as he lowered his spyglass and turned to Jarin and Bar as they stood behind him. "It looks like dragons took out the outermost ships in the blockade. That just makes our job that much easier."

Jarin turned to Barr. "Okay, Lieutenant. Here's what we do... We're

going to fly straight at them, split off and burn the sails of one enemy ship. Once we are clear, head away from Nartara and once out of range, head towards the camp."

"Why just one ship, sir?" Barr asked.

Jarin nodded. Barr was new to dragon riding and had yet to fly a combat mission. "Shot limits. When we get back to camp and rally with the other riders, we don't want Shadowhorn and Brokenclaw to have exhausted their fire."

"I see," said Barr, nodding thoughtfully.

"Admiral Jorgan," Jarin addressed the older man. "Thank you for your hospitality on this ship. I look forward to seeing you again when this is all over to welcome you and your captains home."

Admiral Jorgan clasped Jarin's hand in a firm grip. "I shall look forward to that, sir."

with that, Barr and Jarin made their way to their respective Dragons and took to the air. Their little attack run was successful and they broke off in opposite directions. Jarin enjoyed a few moments of peaceful flight on the way back to the camp. He patted Shadowhorn's neck affectionately. "You've done wonderful, my friend. We've got more to do, but for now, let's just fly."

O O O

Dagur stood on the docks, surveying the damage to the outer-most ships of his fleet. It was too dark when Hiccup and his stupid dragon riders had made their air raid against him, so it was only by the light of dawn that he saw how bad it was. Something on the horizon caught his attention. He counted no less than thirty dots that were slowly taking the shape of ships. He cursed, the spyglass shattering as he threw it on the ground.

"Something vexes you, Lord Dagur?" Alvin asked.

"There's a fleet of ships on their way here. Who do they belong to?" Dagur demanded.

Alvin shrugged. "I'm sure I don't know, _lord_ Dagur," he said, not bothering to hide the sarcasm in his voice. He had the distinct impression that everything was about to fall apart, and all he cared about was finding a way to get away with his hide intact.

Dagur shrugged him off. "Our prisoners escape, clearly with help. Our fleet is stuck here. The dragons can hit us from the air at any time, and there's a fleet of ships baring down on us." He sighed, pacing back and forth. "They leave me no choice," he said. "Begin Operation Slaughter!" he shouted as he turned to Alvin.

"Stoick, Hiccup and the others can have the victory they think they have," he said with a look that could curdle new milk." While they celebrate, the women and children of Nartara will be dying."

O O O

Jarin's peaceful ride ended much sooner than he expected. From the

air he could see a large contingent of Berserker soldiers moving towards the refugee camp, where the women and children of Nartara had retreated to when all this started to go down. "We need to warn them, Shadowhorn. There are too many soldiers and they are too spread out for us to be effective attacking on our own. Fly fast and hard!"

Shadowhorn didn't disappoint. A burst of speed put them over the refugee camp in a matter of minutes, and as soon as Shadowhorn touched down, he leaped out of the saddle. "Listen UP!" he shouted.

The women and children stopped their early morning activities to listen to their Chief's right-hand man.

"The Berserkers are coming here. They are no more than an hour away on foot. Get to your designated shelter areas. Those of you who can fight be ready to defend those who cannot. I will alert the others, and we will get here as quickly as possible. Any questions?"

There were none. He climbed back on Shadowhorn and they sped off towards the resistance camp. They needed to hurry, or things were going to turn really bloody really fast.

* * *

><p>Okay, everyone... I know that it's been a while since my last posting. I'll be wrapping this story up in just a few more chapters. Thank you for your patience.

22. Chapter 22 - Legacy

****Chapter 22 â€" Legacy****

Jarin could not land Shadowhorn back at the resistance camp fast enough. As soon as the Flamescale's feet hit the ground, he flung himself out of the saddle and began running towards the command tent.

"Tarina!" he shouted as he threw back the curtained and stormed in. Tarina, her father, Chief Stoick, Hiccup and Captain Toram all looked up from the map they were studying. Annoyance on their faces turning to concern as they saw the expression on his face.

"What happened," Tarina asked.

Jarin put forth an effort to control his breathing. "There's a massive number of Berserkers heading towards the refugee camp. Far too many for one dragon to stop. They are in the forest as well, so there is no way to know for sure how many there are or where they all are."

Gelbrun pounded a fist on the table. "The women and children!" he shouted.

Hiccup turned to Toram. "I need every capable Dragon Rider at my command, will you accept my authority?"

Captain Toram looked over at Tarina, who nodded. "I will. What are

your orders?"

"Take Jarin, and Barr and head to the Refugee camp immediately. Each of you take a seasoned Nartaran warrior with you. I will take the Riders of Berk with me and we will each carry a warrior from Berk. These warriors will take charge of the camp and do what they can to defend against attacks we cannot see. Once we drop the warriors off, we will position ourselves in a circle above the camp, facing outward. We will blast anything we see advancing. That will be phase one." he turned to Stoick. "Dad?"

"A good plan, son." he looked to Chief Tarina, who nodded. "Phase Two will clearly be the the remainder of the ground troops from both the Nartaran Resistance and the remaining Warriors from Berk marching directly to the refugee camp. We're closer than the enemy, but they've already set out. If we leave immediately, we should be able to intercept them just outside of the camp. I don't like cutting it that close, but we have to play the hand we've been dealt."

"Indeed," said Tarina. "We're going to be badly outnumbered regardless. But we have dragon power. We just need to make sure the enemy is in the open as much as possible to give the Dragon Riders plenty of opportunity to do their thing." Gelbrun was fidgeting nervously and Tarina noticed it. "What is it, father?"

"I want to be one of the Warriors defending the camp." He saw Tarina opening her mouth, clearly about to object. "Please, Chief," he said, acknowledging her authority. "They would not have taken refuge were it not for the state of mind I was in when they fled. I may no longer be chief, but they are still my people, and I will bleed and die to protect them."

Snotlout, who had so far been attending the meeting silently, mumbled something under his breath.

Gelbrun rounded on him. "Yes, I should have had that mindset before. I have not been myself for a long time. The man you see before you today is the man who once led this tribe with honor and dignity. I may not be leading anymore, but I have my honor and dignity back, and I will have my people know that, before the end, I did right by them."

"Whatever," Snotlout said.

"Silence your dog, Stoick!" Tarina's eyes became fierce as she looked at her father, at Snotlout and at Berk's chief. "I am satisfied that Gelbrun has once again become the man who once loved and was loved by his people. And yes, I grant him permission to stand with the refugees in defense of their lives. We are all in this together!"

Stoick looked at his nephew with narrowed eyes. "Do you have a problem with that, Snotlout?"

Snotlout looked as if he was about to say that he did indeed have a problem with it, but he saw the fire in the eyes of both his chief and Chief Tarina. "No, sir," he said. He did not understand the whole 'possessed by evil spirits' thing, or the whole 'One God, Creator of All' thing. But he did understand that it was never wise to cross one Chief, let alone two. Contrary to popular opinion among his peers, he

did think some things through before acting.

Stoick nodded. "Right then. Time is short, and I suggest we all get moving."

Tarina nodded and dismissed everyone and ran to catch up with Jarin as he was leaving.

"Hiccup," Stoick called. "If I may have a word with you, lad?"

O O O

Tarina caught up with Jarin as he was making his way to the barracks area of the resistance camp. "How did it go in Neverthaw?" she asked.

"It went very well," he answered with a weak smile. "By now, Anmiral Jorgan's fleet will have settled in behind Dagur's. His ships are equipped with bow cannons. Something Dagur's ships do not have. All it will take is archars on one of Dagur's ships to even look like they are going to loose arrows, and it's going to be bad news for that ship."

Tarina had known about the Nartaran Navy's use of bow cannons. But Berk's fleet didn't have them, so they were something new to Jarin. "That's good news. When all of this is over, it will be wonderful for all of us to celebrate the return of the Admiral and his Captains."

"Indeed it will," Jarin said with concern in his eyes. "Assuming we all make it to see all of this be over."

"Jarin, my love," she said. "Every one of us will do our best. I have my father back, I have you at my side, and Nartara has the friendship of Berk." She rested her hand on his cheek. "Dagur will not win this day."

"As you say," Jarin replied. "However, knowing Dagur as I do, he will manage to make our victory taste as bitter as defeat. He's got a way with that sort of thing. We'll win, I have no doubt. But the price will be terribly high."

O O O

The initial conflict was horrific. For Dagur's forces. After having dropped off the selected Nartaran warriors, including Gelbrun, to serve as the last line of defense for the women and children in the refugee camp, the dragon Riders of both Berk and Nartara took up position in the air, encircling the camp and watching for Berserker attack. When the attack came the dragon riders descended upon the encroachers and rained fire and death from the sky. But Dagur's forces kept coming. The ground defense arrived and were able to increase the number of Berserker casualties for a short duration. The enemy began to fan out, using the cover of the trees to begin attacking the camp from multiple directions.

Gelbrun managed to finally convince those currently under his charge that he would atone for his previous transgression against them by putting himself between them and the enemy who sought their blood. He said he would be willing to die for them and he meant it. If he

survived this battle, he swore to the Creator of All that he would willingly still face the judgment of his people and accept their decision. And if that meant his execution, then so be it. He loved his people. He would lay down his life for them. Even if doing so was the result of their demand for his death.

As the battle raged on, the dragons defending the refugees from the air began to reach their shot limits, and so were no longer useful from the air, and so they took their position on the ground, between the enemy and the ground warriors defending the refugees...

...All except Hiccup, who had not been seen since dropping off the first ground defenders. Natrtaran warriors wondered where the heir of Berk had gone to, and why he was not standing with the now grounded dragons and their riders. Some of them brooked the question with Stoick the vast, when the fighting had eased off for a moment.

"My son is taking care of something that I have specifically assigned him to. He is not out of this conflict, but what I have him doing will come a bit later. We need only hold out for a bit longer."

That was Stoick's only response on the matter, and the Vikings it was directed at could only nod, as the response carried all the weight of a chief's authority.

O O O

Gelbrun fought with honor and dignity, never once abandoning the field of battle, and always throwing himself at the next wave of enemies threatening the lives of the innocents which he so recently had threatened under the influence of the Voices who bade him commit such horrible acts of evil.

Barr had dismounted from Brokenclaw so that he could better confront Dagur's warriors. He was doing quite well, dropping them to the ground with precision strikes with his sword. There seemed to be a respite, and he took a moment to survey the battlefield. He saw Stoick handling his assailants with equal precision. He saw Jarin doing just as well. And he saw Gelbrun charging into the fray of yet another renewed effort on the part of the enemy determined to get past the former chief. But that was not all he saw. Movement from out of the corner of his eye called attention to a group of archers who were in the process of drawing arrows. Gelbrun was clearly the target.

In this moment, Barr remembered the time before Gelbrun's madness, when the former chief personally defended his sister in an attack on the town. His sister was among those Gelbrun was currently defending. Once again, Gelbrun was putting himself at risk for the sake of his people, but totally oblivious to the the threat to his person.

Barr whistled and Brokenclaw appeared at his side. He mounted up and bade the Majestic Flamescale to charge. Together Dragon and rider charged across the field, closing the distance between themselves and Gelbrun. Barr called for a sudden halt to the charge, and Brokenclaw complied. Barr was hurled out of the saddle and right into the path of the arrows that were loosed by the enemy archers. Had he been but a moment later, the arrows would have found their intended mark, but instead he arrived right on time, and the arrows pierce his body as he fell to the ground.

"For Barrala and Gelbrun!" he shouted as he fell limply to the ground, never to move again

O O O

Swindle, the newly appointed Berserker spymaster, felt the glee ripped from his heart as he watched not one, not two, not five but all ten of the arrows, loosed simultaneously and meant for Gelbrun the mad, embed themselves in the body of a Nartaran warrior dressed in the uniform of the Nartaran elite guard who had thrown himself from the back of a Monstrous Nightmare into the path of those arrows. Annoyance faded to horror as the Dragon in question somehow managed to summon the strength to one last blast of fire, decimating the other archers, leaving Swindle alone.

He drew back his next arrow, Making ready to end the Nightmare's life, but at the last moment, it took to the air. And then Gelbrun was on him with sword and matching dagger flashing in the sunlight. Swindle the Berserker spymaster felt next to nothing as he fell, blood spurting forth with his fading heartbeat, at the feet of the former Nartaran chief.

O O O

Unknown and unseen by Berserker or Nartaran, Hiccup approached the town of Nartara on the back of Toothless, followed by the remaining Dragon Riders of Berk, who were previously ordered to remain behind in \case of an attack from Alvin or Dagur. But with both enemy warlords present in Nartara, Stoick had wisely sent him back to Berk at top Night Fury speed to gather reinforcements.

"Dagur!" Hiccup called from the air. "Come out and face me you coward of all cowards!"

Dagur could not let his challenge go, His attention was focused on Hiccup and his Night Fury, "You will rue the day, runt, that you ever thought to call me coward, you weakling."

"I don't think so, Dagur," said Hiccup. "You are in over your head here. You call yourself a lord, but you are nothing. The fools who follow you are already ruining the day the pledged themselves to you. Surrender."

Dagur began to cackle maniacally. "Never!"

"Surrender!" Hiccup demanded again. Looking with minimal concern at the Berserker warriors rallying behind their insane chief.

"Bring them down!" Dagur shouted. "I don't care what you do with Hiccup, but I want the Night Fury! I'll kill it myself."

Hiccup shook his head at the foolishness. "Now bud!"

Toothless fired a single plasma blast into the sky, and out of the clouds came the remainder of Berk's dragons and their riders. Dagur's warriors were struck down, and Dagur himself found himself alone, facing Berk's heir and his Night Fury. Self preservation kicked in, and Dagur threw down his weapons and threw up his hands. "I yield!"

0 0 0

With the timely arrival of Berk's remaining dragon riders, the tide had turned. Dagur was in custody, and the remainder of his forces had tossed down their weapons. In an act of both wisdom and mercy, Chief Tarina allowed the remaining Berserkers to board what sea-worthy ships were left to them and return home, but not before the Berserker chief signed a treaty with Nartara which stated that any previous terms between Dagur and Alvin the Treacherous were null and void, and that no Berserker ship would dare draw nigh to Nartaran shores, lest the combined might of Nartaran's navy and the newly commissioned Dragon Air Force of Nartara leave them dead and useless at the bottom of the ocean for all time.

Of Alvin the treacherous, there was no sign. At some point during the fighting, he managed to disappear from Dagur's presence. It was later determined that he had boarded a ship that he had secretly dispatched to a remote corner of the island, before the blockade, and had sailed away with as many of his own as he could rally on short notice.

After the Nartaran Navy, under the command of Admiral Jorgan, allowed Dagur's ships to leave Nartaran waters, the old seafarer and his captains stood in the courtyard outside of the fortress Gelbrun had erected. Gelbrub himself was standing there, his hands extended at his side. It was now time to face judgment.

"Gelbrun of Nartara," Chief Tarina began. "You stand before the citizens of Nartara, to face the charges of tyranny and injustice to those you once swore to protect. How plead you?"

"Tarina, my daughter and chief," he began. "People of Nartara," he continued. "I stand before you openly and willingly confessing my horrible crimes... no... sins, which I have committed against all of you, and to many Majestic Flamescales. I have committed murder and have inflicted undeserved pain upon the innocent. I stand before you all, guiltily as charged. I formally abdicate all authority and control of Nartara to Tarina, my daughter, and the only rightful heir to my legacy, such as it was before my fall."

Tarina opened her mouth to speak the words of judgment, but was interrupted by Jarin, who whispered in her ear. The assembled people of Nartara and Berk watch as she first shook her head and then after some more words spoken by Jarin, as she nodded slowly, with a smile spreading on her face.

"Gelbrun of Nartra," she began, "After your actions today, nobody can deny that you have once again embraced reason and the desire to defend your people. With all the power vested in me as Chief of Nartata, I hereby commute the death sentence for your crimes against the people of Nartara. I now turn you over to the justice of the Majestic Flamescales against whom your vendetta, which brought Nartara to its current state, remains unresolved."

Brokenclaw drew himself forward to stand before Gelbrun, the pain of the recent loss of his beloved rider, Barr of Nartara, still plain upon its face.

"I accept my fate, my daughter," Gelbrun announced, turnin towards

the dragon standing before him. "I remember you. From both my own memory and from the memory of Brownscale who resides now in the paradise of the Creator of All. You were the one I first poured out my wrath upon, for I had mistakenly believed that you had killed my wife and son. The truth is now known to me, dragon. That you only sought to honor them with a prayer for their souls. I listened to the voices of evil spirits and so condemned you wrongly. I do not deserve forgiveness, and yet I ask it."

Gelbrun extended his hand out towards the Majestic Flamescale, open palm outward. The dragon sniffed his hand, looked at Tarina, then at the assembled crowd, and finally back to Gelbrun. It huffed and extended his snout, resting it against the former mad chief's open palm.

Gelbrun was overwhelmed. His knees gave out as wave after wave of joy and forgiveness washed over him. This was the Dragon Bond. He and Brokenclaw were now tied together mentally and spiritually in a way that no Viking who had not had a similar experience could hope to understand.

"Gelbrun of Nartara," began Tarina. "You have been pardoned by me of crimes against humanity, and clearly by Brokenclaw for crimes against Dragon-kind. You are free to go."

Gelbrun arose and stepped forward. "Thank you for your justice, my daughter. But I will not go free. For what I have done against both dragon and citizen of Nartara, I cannot accept forgiveness. I do however, accept the grace which the Lord God Almighty has extended to me this day. Never again shall I walk the streets of Nartara, lest I remind anyone or be reminded of the atrocities I committed here. I both demand and accept permanent exile from Nartara to Dragon Island, where I will live out the last of my days co-existing with Dragon-kind, which I had hated for so long. So shall it be!"

Tarina was stricken by this declaration from her father, but was powerless to nullify it. She had granted him freedom, and he had freely chosen this course of action. "Very well," she said. "From this day forth, you are exiled from Nartara, never to walk her streets again, to live out your days among the creatures you have wrongly borne such contempt for years. By the time rises tomorrow, you must begone from these shores."

Gelbrun bowed before his Daughter. He then turned towards Jarin who stood beside her. "Take care of her, lad," he said. He turned then to Stoick the Vast. "And so, as it turns out, you and I both are a pair of dragon lovers, eh?"

Stoick laughed. "It would seem so"

O O O

The next day, there was no sign of Gelbrun anywhere on Nartara, and Brokenclaw was missing as well. Clearly, the formerly mad chief had accepted and begun his exile.

Time went on, as time does. Tarina and Jarin's love grew, and they were married, and in their union, consummated in the presence of Nartaran witnesses, they brought forth a son and a daughter, whose names would go down in Nartaran history as belonging to two wise

leaders who completed the change of nartara from an island bent on the destruction of dragons to an island that embraced their presence.

The Nartaran banner, which up to this point had borne the symbol of a Monstrous Nightmare skewered by spears to the outline of a Majestic Flamescale with its wings upraised in praise of the Creator of All.

In Berk, many challenges befell Hiccup and his fellow Dragon-riders, including the rise of a dark warrior named Drago Bloodvist, and the death of Stoick the Vast in the initial conflict. Hiccup and Toothless had managed to defeat the dark warrior and the massive Titan-class dragon he controlled, and under his leadership, Berk prospered...

O O O

Many years passed and age finally caught up with Gelbrun. It had been a particularly mild winter on Dragon Island, warm by comparison to the years that had come before. Of course, living on an island with a volcano ensured some measure of warmth. It was also the source of all the fog that stretched from the island to Helheim's Gate. But even with the volcano, Gelbrun could not remember a warmer winter.

He missed Nartara, and his daughter. He had heard about the birth of his grandson who was named Gelbrun in his honor, but the decree he had embraced forbade him to go to them, or them to go to him. So he would never meet the next generation of his family. Stoick the Vast had died about ten years ago, and Hiccup was now chief, and he and Astrid had been blessed with strong and healthy children, and word had it, soon to be grandchildren.

He lay in his bed, totally worn out. He had seen so much since coming to Dragon Island. The Dragons who somehow seemed to know who he was had embraced him. The memory of the atrocities their kind had inflicted upon human kind never left them, and they would extend forgiveness and acceptance even as the humans of Berk had extended the same to them. The world had changed, and Gelbrun had seen it happen.

"God all-mighty," he said as he felt wariness surround him. "Thank you for your grace and mercy. You are Lord forever..." With that, he closed his eyes and exhaled as darkness wrapped him in her sweet, gentle embrace, no further breath to come to him in Midgard.

O O O

Gelbrun became aware of the sound of birds peacefully chirping and the sound of a steady but calm breeze blowing through leaves of trees, carrying with it scents he had never smelled before, none of them foul in the slightest way. Darkness faded to glorious light, and he found himself under a tree at the edge of the Meadow of Paradise again. It was different now. The greens were greener and the blues were bluer than he had ever seen. Presently, he noticed an unfamiliar fruit hanging from a low branch. It looked similar to an apple, but its color was somewhere between blue and red, but Gelbrun could not put the word "purple" to it. It looked very appealing. He reached out, plucked it off the branch and almost dropped it as he watched a new fruit just like it grow and ripen right before his eyes.

"Isn't it amazing, father?," a voice inquired from Gelbrun's left. He turned and looked and there sat Gelb in the same pristine white robe he was wearing before. "It is called the Fruit of the Tree of Life, and in this place we may now eat of it freely." with that, Gelb took a bite of one of the fruits himself, deep blue juice dripping onto his spotless white robe, only to fade away a moment later. "Try it," he said.

Gelbrun tentatively bit into the fruit. A flavor like he had never tasted exploded on his tongue, and a invigorating sensation seemed to spread throughout his body as he swallowed. He wanted to weep with joy. He devoured the rest of the fruit, as if he had never eaten before in his life, though he had no real sensation of hunger.

"The rules here are different, father," Gelb said. "You can eat as much as you want. It is not gluttony to want that which has been prepared for your pleasure."

Gelbrun sighed and leaned back against the tree. "My son," he said. "I was in so much pain only moments before, and now the pain is gone. I assume that I have come home to stay?"

Gelb looked at his father and smiled. "Of course. You have paid what you owed. You made the remaining years of your life as though you were a new person, putting aside the old. You earned the respect of both Dragon and human in Heaven, and though history on Earth... Midgard... will not remember your name, I can tell you that it is written in the Book here."

"Book?" asked Gelbrun.

Gelb nodded. "The Book of Life, father. Your faith made it possible, and God has granted it."

"I want to see Him, son," Gelbrun said.

Gelb smiled. "You will, father. Very soon. I was sent to greet you. There are others you must meet."

"Brokenclaw!" Gelbrun shouted. "Oh, no. He's back there alone. I left him."

"Yes, father." Gelb said, with his head bowed. "He will not survive the grieving process, but he is not alone. Brownscale's soul is with him, speaking comfort to him. And while he is in terrible pain at the moment from your passing, soon he will know the peace and joy you are beginning to experience. He's coming home."

"It's strange," Gelbrun said. "I am sad, and yet I cannot seem to shake the feeling of joy enough to form tears."

"You are home, now, father," Gelb said. "God has wiped away the tears. There is no pain or sorrow here. There is no more death."

Gelb led his father away from the fruit trees and across the meadow towards a gate set into a wall of polished blue stone that seemed transparent at one glance and opaque at another, as if it was and was not there. The gate was made of what looked like solid pearl,

shimmering in the radiant light that Gelbrun realized was not coming from any sun. The light just was. He marveled at the realization that it cast no shadows, and he asked Gelb about it.

"No shadows here," Gelb replied. "No night. No darkness. You are basking in the light of God's glory, father. It is everywhere. For this is His kingdom, and it shall never end."

"Amazing," was all Gelbrun could say.

Gelb smiled. "Indeed."

As they passed through the gate, the world around him shifted. If the meadow was beautiful, this new place was infinitely more so. The streets were like liquid gold, pure and mirror-like, and indescribable colors seemed to be refracting everywhere from something in the sky.

"Oh, my!" said Gelbrun as he beheld what looked like a multi-layered cube-like city suspended in the sky. "It is so beautiful!"

"It will be called 'New Jerusalem' in the fullness of time." Gelb said. "After Armageddon, which we once called Ragnarok. But there is still a long count of earthly-years before that. It won't seem so long for us, because here, a thousand years might as well be a day."

Gelbrun closed his eyes and nodded slowly. Everything was new here. but he found himself understanding without difficulty.

"If you will excuse me, father, I'll go fetch the others," Gelb said. "Please wait here." And with that, Gelb was gone.

He didn't walk away. He simply was there one moment and gone the next. Gelbrun wondered if that was how souls moved about in this place, unbound by the constraints of time. He was about to put it to the test when suddenly he sensed the presence of one whose virtue surged through every fiber of his being and joy anew washed over him. He slowly turned and a glorious radiance was before him, taking the shape of a man whose silhouette was backdropped by an immense sea, still as crystal.

Gelbrun could not stand. He fell to his knees and cried "Lord God Almighty!"

The one who stood before him came into focus. His hair was white as wool, made so by the light that shone round about him. He regarded Gelbrun with eyes that conveyed both undefeatable authority and unspeakable tenderness at the same time. "I AM," he said, simply

Gelbrun knew the Voice. When he was first pulled into Paradise where he learned the truth about how his wife and son died, the voices of the demons who had possessed him tried to entice him away from the truth. But THE Voice, which was greater than theirs, had silenced them.

Gelbrun had so many questions, and he opened his mouth to speak, but the Creator of All simply looked into his eyes. From that moment, nothing was a mystery. He understood everything. Being in this

presence was to have everything he ever wanted, be everything he ever imagined, and arrive at everywhere he ever dreamed of going.

"Gelbrun, My beloved child," said the same voice that spoke the universe into existence, with affectionate tones. "You have fought the good fight. Your life which I redeemed was spent bringing honor to my name, and your heart was filled with the joy of praise, even in the face of adversity. Vengeance is and always will be mine, but it was well that you were a tool by which it was dealt. Murder and violation of innocence was answered with justice, and aside from the deaths at your hand in the battle that followed, deaths of those who had long since rejected Me and who never would have called on me as you did, you took no more lives and did no harm. Their time had come, and I chose to allow you to be the shears that cut the dead branches from the vine. In the year that followed, you proclaimed me to any who would hear, and have planted the seed of Truth in the hearts of many. In time, the Truth will come to the part of the world you were born into, and many will embrace it because of that seed. Well done, good and faithful servant."

Then He was gone... Well, not gone. Just not standing in front of Gelbrun anymore. He was in fact, everywhere. Gelbrun turned back around, and before him stood his wife, his daughter, his son, his son-in-law, and there was Barr who sacrificed himself on the battlefield to save him.

"Tarina?" Gelbrun asked. "Jarin? How is it that you are here?"

Tarina smiled. "While God was speaking to you here, many years passed back on Midgard. Our work is done there, and we are home as well. As are our Dragon friends. They wait for us at the mansions prepared for us by the Architect of the Ages. We shall never be parted again.

Thousands of years passed by mortal reckoning. Seals were opened. Trumpets were sounded, and flasks were poured out. The rallying call came. Thor, whom Gelbrun learned was an Angelic being who was sent to be a protector of the simple people who called themselves Vikings, oversaw the preparations of those under his charge. Valhalla, the district of Heaven in which Gelbrun's mansion resided, was emptied and its citizens were readying themselves for war.

"Ragnarok is at hand!" Thor shouted. "The Last Battle. When the Lord of Lords calls, we ride forth on dragons and on horses. The Beast and False Prophet shall be bound, and the Great Liar with them. We shall cleanse the way for the King of Kings, whose just dominion shall never end, though His court shall only be held on Midgard for a thousand years. All Glory to the Lord of Glory forever!"

That last proclamation was echoed by the assembled Vikings. Gelbrun saw the Angelic being known as Michael rallying the souls of those who had been martyred for the sake of the name of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Moments later, the Glorious One Himself appeared, riding on a white horse. A name was written upon the sash of his robe: Jesus, and His title King of Kings and Lord of Lords was also written.

Jesus raised his hands majestically, and the fabric of reality was parted like a curtain, and the Heavenly Host looked down upon a battlefield. Jesus took a deep breath and spoke, his voice shaking the lands below. "I am Alpha and Omega; The First and the Last, the Beginning and the End!"

And with that, the Armies of the redeemed rode forth to what some called Ragnarok and what others called Armageddon. It was a battle like no other. the Lord of All had come, and with every word He spoke, the declared enemies of God and servants of evil died. The Redeemed Army spilled no blood. They were there as an honor guard to the King of Kings, there to bear witness to justice being done upon all of the injustices of the ages.

Within the scope of a day, it was finished. The saints went marching into the city called Jerusalem. "Oh Lord," Said Gelbrun, "Thank you for allowing me to be in that number."

The end of the age had come, and a new age was about to begin. And it would be glorious. Of that, Gelbrun had no doubt. And he would spend that age with his daughter Tarina, his son-in-law Jarin, His grandson who carried his name. His faith in the Creator of All, the One True God, had sparked much curiosity among the people, and many came to embrace the truth of it. The salvation he had received that fateful day so many years ago had become his legacy...

...The legacy of Nartara.

* * *

><p>And so ends "Jarin and the Legacy of Nartara." It is my hope that you have enjoyed reading it as much as I have enjoyed writing it. For those who have left reviews and sent private messages, both posiyitive and negative, you have my thanks. Be blessed.

I have no plans for any sequels to this story. I am not closing the door to the possibilities of more writing in this alternative universe of How to Train Your Dragon. However, should more writing be fortholing, it will likely only be in the form of one-shot stories.

Again, thank you very much

End
file.